

## Final Report–Faculty Senate President, 2005-06

It has been an incredibly busy year. As is typically the case, we accomplished many of the things we set out to do this year and leave several tasks for the 2006-07 Senate to complete. As the Summary of Actions Taken [<http://www.siu.edu/~facsenat/restrack5.html>] indicates, we passed resolutions addressing a variety of issues and domains including, among others: staff identification cards, posthumous degrees, bus service for field trips, support for students called up for military service, approval of a new specialization in Teaching English as a New Language, student email addresses, opposition to confiscation of film and similar property, revisions of faculty grievance procedures, support for the capital campaign, support for graduate fellowships, support for the recommendations of the Provost's Ad Hoc Committee on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues, recommendations pertaining to campus land use plans, endorsement of the IBHE Faculty Advisory Council's Eight Theses, the revised Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment Policy, approval of the RME to eliminate the Fibers/Weaving specialization from the Art major in the School of Art and Design, and a recommendation that the departments of Linguistics and Foreign Languages and Literatures explore the possibility of a merger.

Virtually every Senator as well as several other faculty members who served as proxies made significant contributions to the aforementioned list of accomplishments. I wish to offer a special thanks to the following colleagues who contributed above and beyond the call of duty: Ramanarayanan Viswanathan, Vice President and Elections Chair; James Kelly, Secretary; James Duggan, Committee on Committees Chair; Alan Karnes, Faculty Advisory Council to the IBHE; Terry Clark, Budget Committee Chair; Kay Zivkovich, Faculty Status and Welfare Chair; Michael Sullivan and George Feldhamer, Governance Committee Chairs; Todd Winters, Undergraduate Education Policy Committee Chair; Robbie Lieberman, JRB Chair; and Joseph Brown, UEPC's Linguistics Review Panel Chair. I would also like to thank Provost and Vice Chancellor John Dunn for his sustained commitment to keeping the Executive Council and the Senate informed on matters relevant to faculty, and Chancellor Walter Wendler for the opportunity to serve on his Executive Committee and for his willingness to listen to our ideas and concerns. Last, but certainly not least, I am indebted to Becky Molina Armstrong for her devotion, professionalism, and extraordinary talents. We are quite fortunate to have Becky working on our behalf.

I conclude this report by offering three recommendations for the next Senate's consideration. First, I urge the Senate to continue to work on enhancing shared governance. We have made some progress toward fashioning a more faculty-centered model for having an impact on significant decision making processes. However, our effectiveness remains limited by our "advisory" status rather than actually *sharing* in governance matters.

Second, I recommend that the Senate alter our leadership transitions. Currently, the new president takes office immediately after the election. Consequently, there is no period of transition. At the minimum, the Senate would be well-served if the new officers had one month to prepare to take office. That would mean that officers would serve from June through the following May. The Senate might consider improving our leadership transitions by changing to a vice president as president-elect system whereby the VP would become the president at the end of one year. Such a change would, of course, require working out a few logistical details and changing our *Operating Paper*.

Third, I urge the Senate to entertain changing our *Operating Paper* to limit Senate eligibility to faculty members who do not serve in SIUC administrative positions. My fundamental reason for this recommendation is that senators who have administrative appointments frequently encounter conflicts of interests. While I deeply appreciate the contributions our fellow Senators who also serve as administrators have made to the Senate, I am also personally aware of the problems associated with such dual roles. I was first elected to the Senate while serving as a department chair. Until the end of my tenure as chair, I found it necessary to hold back on being a full-fledged faculty advocate out of fear that my department might be penalized. Moreover, as department chair, I received several communications reminding me that I was an administrator first and a faculty member second. In the two years I have served on the Senate's Executive Council I have observed numerous instances of Senator/administrators taking sectarian ("zero sum") positions rather than faculty-centered positions. Until such time that the faculty and the administration share governance at SIUC, faculty interests would be better served by limiting Senate membership to those whose loyalties to the faculty are undivided.

Thank you for affording me the opportunity to serve you. It's been an experience I'll never regret, forget, or repeat.

Rob Benford