

March Faculty Senate Report
FAC IBHE

The Faculty Advisory Council met at Eastern last Friday. Most of our time was spent preparing for a presentation the group will make to the Board on April 1, but we did spend some time with Jill Nelson, VP for External Relations at Eastern and a member of the Higher Education Legislative coalition. The Coalition is a group made up of unions, the publics the Board, the Community College Board and others interested in promoting the interests of higher education in the legislature.

The group is responsible for the lobby day on April 9 and they try to get everyone on the same message with the legislature. They have some problems, however—no staff and no budget. These people do the work pretty much on their own time, so it is not as efficient as you would think. For example, the publics are inconsistent in how they approach lobby day. Some schools charter busses and recruit faculty and students to attend. Others do not. I am not sure what we do, but I have not heard of anything being done here.

In some good news, the House Higher Education Appropriations Committee, chaired by David Miller from Dolton, has called the governor's bluff on public universities budget requests. Under the current administration, universities have been told what to ask for—and this year that is nothing. Miller has instructed them to ask for what they need. Illinois State asked for 10%, Western for 15%, while we have asked for 8.5%. Will this make a difference—who knows, but at least it is nice to see that we are not getting what we need out on the table. I encourage you to write Representative Miller and express your appreciation for the committee's work. His email is repdavidmiller@aol.com. Include a story about a student who had to cut back on hours or quit because of financing or some other story to make it personal. His regular mail address is 1350 E. Sibley Blvd. Dolton, IL 60419

Here is some other evidence of the effects of the awful budgets over the last half decade, and one that really illustrates who is being affected. At SIU, of those students applying for financial aid and who are dependents of their families, overall there has been a 1.9% increase from fall of 2000 through fall of 2006. Basically all of the lower family income groups have gone down—Some dramatically—\$12-24,000, down 41%, \$24-36,000, down 28%, \$36-48,000, down 18%, \$48-60,000, down 10% and over \$60,000, up 22%. In fall of 00, the over \$60,000 families made up 44% of the aid applicants, in the fall of 06 they represented 53%.

The picture at Illinois State is even more dramatic. From FY 2002 to FY 2007, applicants from families with incomes from \$0-27,000, down 14%, \$27-48,000, down 25%, \$48-70,000, down 33%, \$70-100,000, down 10% and over \$100,000, up 61%. What does all of this show—the promise of social mobility is going by the wayside. If this continues, the workforce in Illinois will be bunched at the low end. We could look like Mississippi and Louisiana in 10 years—Unable to attract the types of business that will make up the core of the new economy.

One other item to keep an eye on. There are four bills introduced in the house that would transfer the budgeting power of the IBHE for Community Colleges to the Illinois Community College Board. This would not be a good development. Would fracture the higher ed community and put us in an inferior funding position—All representatives have a community college in their district—Not true for us.