

April 28, 2009

Faculty Senate End-of-Year President's Report:

Dear SIUC Faculty,

It has been a pleasure to serve as the Faculty Senate President since January, 2008.

This has been a trying and difficult 16 months. Shortly after I became the Faculty Senate president, the Board of Trustees was criticized for the lack of women in academic administration. President Poshard brought to my attention grave concerns he had with then Chancellor Fernando Treviño, which led him to remove the Chancellor from his office. The University was faced with declining enrollment and dismal retention rates, and the North Central Accreditation committee was slated for an on-campus site visit in Spring of 2009. Things didn't look rosy. I vowed to work with the faculty and the administration to help turn the ship around.

So, to address the recruitment, enrollment and retention dilemma, the Senate reviewed and supported efforts to extend in-state tuition to bordering states and to enhance our marketing throughout the region. We asked for faculty representation on the Enrollment Management Committee, and subsequently placed Senator Pam Smoot on that committee. We heard presentations on the First Year Experience and supported a resolution for the philosophy and continued support of the FYE. We talked about, but ultimately tabled, our discussion on Signature programs due to concerns about budgetary constraints.

To address the representation of women in upper administration, I worked with Michelle Miller to develop a strategic plan on this matter which was submitted to the President's Office. I believe that it is now with the Chancellor. I was a member of the pre-search committee for the upcoming Chancellor Search Committee and will be co-chairing that committee. Finally, the Senate discussed and passed a resolution to continue our support for Diversity and Affirmative Action, as well as a resolution to have a strong faculty and staff voice in the search and selection of academic administrators. These efforts, along with continued vigilance, should help to open the doors of upper administration to talented women and other under-represented populations.

The Senate has also been instrumental in helping the University develop an effective policy and set of procedures and guidelines on sexual harassment. After extensive discussion and input from the faculty, the Senate passed a resolution to improve a draft of a revised policy and procedures that was more fair and transparent to all interested parties. This resolution was extensively relied upon in deliberations by the administration and Faculty Association (with advice from an ad hoc advisory group) on the final policy, which is being submitted to the Board for approval.

Since May 2008, the Senate has passed 15 resolutions that include support for several changes to undergraduate majors, minors and specializations, electronic balloting for Faculty Senate and Judicial Review Board (JRB) elections, and solidifying the number of tenure and tenure-track faculty to be represented on the Faculty Senate, as well as

affirming our support for diversity and affirmative action, and other actions discussed above.

I leave the office of Senate President with two unresolved matters:

First, you may recall that the Chancellor eliminated the office of Faculty and Staff Ombudsman, citing redundancy with the University Ombudsman's Office and efficiency concerns. The Senate reviewed these concerns and concluded that the Faculty and Staff ombudsman position did not substantially overlap with the University Ombudsman office, and it filled a vital role for the University in helping to resolve faculty and staff-related disputes, thus saving the University from potentially costly litigation matters. To date, this position has not been reinstated, so the next Senate ought to look into this matter and advocate for its reinstatement.

Second, you may also recall that we have had conversations with the Chancellor regarding the value of the JRB in shared governance in light of his decision to partially or substantially overturn unanimous JRB decisions that were not in the administration's favor. In a letter to the JRB, the Chancellor asserted his support for the JRB in general, but also for his right to executive control over University decisions. The Senate also passed a resolution asking the Board of Trustees to hear a grievance stemming from one of these JRB matters and to overturn the Chancellor's decision on the matter. The President formed a committee to advise him on the grievance and to develop a policy on faculty development. I am serving on this committee. Hopefully, there will be a resolution on the particular grievance before the end of the semester. However, the Senate needs to continue its discussions with the Chancellor about the role of the JRB in shared governance.

In closing, I would like to thank all of the members of the 2008-2009 Faculty Senate for their hard work and devotion to matters that came before us. I know that every committee worked hard this year. I would like to thank my Executive Council: Sanjeev Kumar (Vice President), Mary Lamb (Secretary), Mark Amos (Governance), Terry Clark (Budget), Phillip Howze (Faculty Status and Welfare), Allan Karnes (SIUC representative to the IBHE Faculty Advisory Council), Pam Smoot (Undergraduate Education Policy Committee) and Rebecca Weston (Committee on Committees) for keeping my head straight and for their yeoman work this year.

Finally, I am particularly indebted to Becky Armstrong for her expertise, efficiency and level-headedness. The Senate would be lost without you!