

April Senate Report

Since our last meeting, I have been to a FAC meeting in Champaign and an IBHE meeting in Chicago. Things at the state level continue to fall apart. I am sure you have heard about our new two tier pension plan. New hires cannot retire with full benefits until age 67 and compensation over \$108,000 does not count. This is going to be a major detriment in future hiring into the state. The full board seems to understand this and all of them (at least those willing to make a statement about it) are in full support for a revenue increase. One of the members Proshanta K. Nandi said the public universities should increase tuition 100% to let the general public know their legislators are not doing their jobs.

At the U of I meeting, we had a panel with several system level administrators. Two interesting items

1st—The amount of cut for higher ed for FY 11 is limited by the federal stimulus funding. They cannot cut below I think it was the FY 08 level. Which is what the budget calls for. When we start FY 12, however, that limitation is gone. And if there is not a revenue enhancement—the FY 11 cuts may seem tame. A very scary prospect.

2nd—the U of I has hired a former lobbyist in their alumni association that is recruiting alumni to talk to their representatives on behalf of the university. And I think it is working. Board staff who work with the legislature report legislators hearing from U of I alums on behalf of higher education.

That gets me back to what we need to do. Call or write your representatives. Let them know we need a revenue enhancement. Without one, we may see devolution of the higher education system in the state. I am not sure there aren't people who would not be upset if we end up with a system of one research school and a bunch of teaching schools with limited graduate degrees.