February 8, 2008

Dear AP Council,

First, let me offer my apologies for this late submission concerning the Academic Senate meeting held on January 23, 2008. As the minutes were 21 pages long, I wanted first to see them before summarizing what happened. Thank you for your patience in that regard.

**Presentations:**

The Senate issued its members four documents relevant to upcoming presentations:

- 01.15.08.01 Enrollment Management and Changing Demographics—Excerpt from Slide Presentation (Jon Rosenthal)
- 01.23.08.01 Underrepresented Groups—Programs Supporting Recruitment and Retention (Jon Rosenthal)
- 10.16.06.01 Native American Student Recruitment and Retention Concerns: Letter to 2006-07 Academic Senate Chairperson (Susan Kalter)
- 12.18.07.01 Native American Student Retention and Recruitment Recommendations (Susan Kalter)

In his presentation, Dr. Rosenthal noted, “There are lots of indicators,” freshman retention rate 83%, graduation rate (10% increase in last decade), average ACT for incoming freshmen (from 22 to 24 in five years), “that we really are the institution of choice for undergraduate students after the University of Illinois at Urbana.” In addition to offering statistics concerning where ISU stands in relation to other universities in the state, Rosenthal also summarized a series of initiatives concerning admission and retention of students that promise to help ISU maintain its position as the school of choice in upcoming years. If there was one problem Dr. Rosenthal highlighted, it was increasing our program capacity to meet the needs of our incoming students. “We have about 3,800 spots for the 5,000 students we enroll every fall,” he said, “[and we] have lots of requirements to get into a major and I think that we have to address that as a faculty and as a campus and try to turn that back just a little bit. This is a real problem for transfer students.”

Following his presentation, Dr. Rosenthal fielded a number of queries. In one instance, a senate member asked what individual faculty members could do to help in recruitment, admissions, retention. Rosenthal’s response was, “We don’t need anything dramatic….teach good classes; let students in when they ask for an override every now and then….take the time to chat with students out of class,” and be proactive.

This was by far the best presentation and question/answer session the Senate has had this year to date. Basically, Jon Rosenthal was telling the Senate ISU is in good shape; however, there are areas where we can be more proactive.
Ann Haugo, Theatre faculty member, followed Dr. Rosenthal and introduced short-term and long-term recommendations for Native American recruitment and retention. One senator asked how many students we are talking about. Senator Kalter noted 66 students .3% of the population. Rosenthal quickly pointed out that the state numbers were .2% of the population, “so we are talking about very small numbers.” Nevertheless, the suggestions about doing more in Chicago were noted.

**Administrators’ Remarks:**

President Bowman talked primarily about the mid-year raises, noting that they were directed toward full and associate professors. 434 people received raises in January. Civil Service salaries, he noted, “are about 1.2% higher than their peer group averages at universities with similar civil service classifications. AP salaries, as a group, are at or above comparison group averages.” He did mention that there were pockets of APs and non-negotiated CS employees who are below the averages and the university plans to address those.

Provost Murphy followed, noting that applications are up 9% and admissions are up 10%. When asked about the Stevenson move, she deferred to Chuck McGuire. In his presentation, he noted why this was a “life safety” project, how much it cost, and when parts of the building will be open. Apparently, in August, faculty will move back into the top two floors of the building. During the summer the whole building has to be vacant. They have only identified 150 office spaces for 211 faculty, 51 staff, and 62 G.A.s for the summer; however, the “bottom line is that every faculty member who needs an office will have an office. It may be necessary to double up occasionally.”

V.P. Bragg offered a mixed picture of the world-wide credit and financial markets and how they apply to ISU; however, he was optimistic about the potential of the fiscal budget for 2009 and ISU’s ability to potentially borrow $51 million for the construction, largely, of the rec. center.

Bragg also noted that a year ago Illinois passed a new bill concerning the disposal of electronic equipment. Basically, the bill requires us to ship all electronic equipment to the quad cities to clean and recycle it. “I mean everything,” he said, “from computers and monitors to desktop calculators, cell phones, everything.” ISU will be charge $35 for each article. ISU petitioned for an exemption but failed to get one. Bragg was not sure how this would play out.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 and I made it home just in time to go to bed. If you have any questions or would like to see any of the documents handed out to the Senate, you can access them on the Senate website or I can show you my copy. In summary, Dr. Rosenthal painted a rather optimistic portrait of I.S.U., contrary to what many thought were gloomy data. Dr. Bowman made sure to note that ISU is doing a great job, particularly given national statistics, admitting, retaining and graduating students from under-represented groups. This does not mean we cannot do better; but, everyone should
give Admissions a thumbs up for everything they have done. The only troubling note, offered by Dr. Bragg, I thought, was the potential that we would all be charged $35 every time we wanted to get rid of a dead calculator or electronic stapler. I will keep you informed if there are any developments on that front.

Cheers,

Ron

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