# SENATE AGENDA ITEM II.D.1.

**27 August 2019**

# IBHE Faculty Advisory Council Notes for April to June 2019

*Background on the Illinois Board of Higher Ed’s Faculty Advisory Council (FAC): Illinois is unique in having a state-wide Faculty Advisory Council, an advisory council to the IBHE that consists of representatives from all of the public universities, plus rotating membership from community colleges and from private and proprietary colleges and universities. Each member institution has both a representative and an alternate to assure attendance at meetings, which typically occur once a month from September to June. Institutions take turns hosting the meetings. Note: the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is another advisory body to the IBHE, but (different) community college representatives also serve on FAC; the inclusion of diverse types of institutions on FAC assists with engaging issues that cut across Illinois’s higher education institutions.*

WIU’s representative to FAC is Amy Carr (Liberal Arts & Sciences); the alternate is Emily Shupe (Kinesiology).

Below are notes from the April, May, and June meetings—most drawn directly from the minutes (with a focus on information that seems of most potential interest to Faculty Senate).

## April 19 FAC Meeting at Bradley University

Bradley University Provost Walter Zakahi noted that BU’s approach to shared governance and program prioritization started with a new strategic plan. The development of that plan began in Fall 2016 and underwent iterations until all questions were resolved. After approval by Faculty Senate and Board of Trustees, an implementation plan was developed in 2017 and they are currently working on program prioritization. All data and results have been available to the campus on an internally facing website. During discussion, he indicated that program may get closed; they are looking at the upcoming drop in high school graduates as something to be planned for. Criteria for prioritization included demand, centrality to mission, student success, efficiency, productivity, and financial viability. In response to a question about whether American Council on Education (ACE) fellowships (part of Provost Zakahi’s experience) might lead to groupthink for administrators, the Provost indicated that while possible, this might also be an indicator of the current times leading to common concerns.

Illinois State Senator Dave Koehler (D-46) (who double-majored in Religion and Sculpture as an undergraduate) talked about his path to the legislature and the committees he is currently engaged with (education and health care). He stated that we don’t manage healthcare in Illinois – we manage healthcare financing. The teacher shortage is related to supply and demand – pay what folks are worth and you’ll have enough good teachers. He hopes we are now on track for some improvements but it will take time. Things that aren’t in the budget aren’t priorities. Topics during open Q&A:

Regarding Dual Credit – on why the burden on K-12 is being increased, and on Senate Bill 1501, Koehler said that folks are seeking short-term fixes that are inexpensive, rather than long term fixes that involve money. Not much is being heard about the dual credit issues that could force community colleges to choose between state law and accreditation. Senate Bill 1501 is dead (although things can always come back). He suggested that IFT or IEA are helpful with some of these issues; more pushback needs to be heard from higher ed. **They hear from school board alliances and K-12, but not as much from higher ed – figure out who has that voice and strengthen it.**

Talking about funding and the damage that can be done by short-term fixes, Koehler said the biggest issue coming up with be the fair tax constitutional amendment, which goes on the ballot November 2020. This will be the focus for all good and bad related to government; his view is that Illinois is trying to do what neighboring states like Iowa and Wisconsin have been doing for years. Without revenue for our priorities, how will we reach them? However, the state may need to prioritize what it wants to do and be creative about revenue. DK supports doubling the gas tax, for example.

On the proposed pension change bill: The state doesn’t allow municipalities to miss pension payments, but the state does. Have to look forward; comments that this is detrimental to new folks that pay the cost.

Regarding healthcare, Koehler feels the focus on patient quality outcome (part of Affordable Care Act and Illinois’ SMART Act) is the right focus to have. A financially motivated system exacerbates the haves and have-nots.

Working groups met. There were six working groups last year: on Program Prioritization and Consolidation; Dual Credit; P-20 Outreach; a ‘This I Believe’ document (about the value of university education); and the Illinois Articulation Initiative. White papers from PPC and “This I Believe” were approved later in the meeting.

The three caucuses met. One caucus is for public university representatives; another is for private/non-profit/for-profit institutions; a third is for community colleges.

## May 17 FAC Meeting in Springfield

The meeting was held at the offices of the Illinois Association of School Boards, and six members of the IBHE staff attended part of the meeting.

Nyle Robinson, Interim Executive Director, IBHE, expressed hope about the proposed budget. Aim High has started to have an impact and improve perceptions. Most concerns have started to fade. Several priorities:

1) Time to rework the master plan. Budget impasse changes the perception of things. Need to work to restore our powerful system with so many options (2yr, 4yr, public, private, etc.). Without funding it is hard to know how to move forward. Would like a lot of input, like last time, but they are thinking about written input, which is less expensive than some other options (public hearings, outside consultants)

2) Rebuilding coalition for higher education. During impasse, coalition revolved around “need to fund higher ed”. Group fizzled as impasse ended. Nationwide problem about perception of higher ed, may be particularly bad in Illinois. Looking at a catch-phrase like “check Illinois first” to encourage students to consider Illinois schools. Stakeholders are ready to get involved. They want to have a set of principles for September/October, when there is a meeting of high school counselors (to change that advice to get out of the state).

A related issue is the problem with the Truth in Tuition law, and how that caused universities to increase tuitions by about 10%. We might have the highest freshman tuition and lowest senior. When this started in 2011, it was also a time of financial instability, so that contributed to the problem. For example, Iowa State is #2 in recruiting Illinois students. They set their freshman tuition low, but this year raised tuition by >4%.

The impact of higher ed in Illinois was estimated as 50 billion dollars, and we know that’s low. Getting more out of messaging is needed, as is work with the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC).

3) Work with publics to improve recruitment and retention, modernize forms of delivery (online, competency-based education). Will have to be a coalition of the willing [i.e, those actually willing to support credentialing that doesn’t involve conventional professors teaching classes; questions made clear that many faculty will resist this]. Governor’s office is throwing out the numbers of 65% by 2025 (and we weren’t making enough progress toward the 60% by 2025). Need to improve performance in areas such as underrepresented minorities and rural areas. Asian population already above 60%, whites will be at that number in a few years, so…all that progress should, for equity, be from black and Hispanic/Latino. Current overall credential rate is at 51.2%.

Stephanie Bernoteit Deputy Director of Academic Affairs, IBHE, talked about the negotiated rule making process for the Department of Education (federal level). This process requires unanimous agreement on all rules from the stakeholders – and this happened, April 3rd this year. There were discussions about: what types of entities accredit (the Higher Learning Commission might get reduced in size and scope, but regional accreditation will be retained); faith-based institutions and their access; and innovation in education. The last included considerations of removing the tie to the credit hour and focusing on learning in terms of competencies, but concerns about bad actors suggest that the risks in such an approach are too great at this time. However, there was agreement to allow more room to manage and monitor learning with reference to a “Dear Colleague” letter from President Obama. Rules should be released sometime this summer, with public comment to follow. [Side note: at least two WIU faculty offered comments.] Once public comments are completed, the DOE must respond to every comment. Implementation could be July or September of 2020. IBHE staff are also following conversations about reauthorizing the higher education act and associated revisions to the 90/10 rule, which speaks to how institutions of higher ed can access and use federal aid (including veteran benefits) — must have no more than 90% of income from federal sources. Who has access to federal funds was also a thread; stakeholders are interested in alternative ways to get post-secondary credentials (e.g. coding boot camps that use job income percentage to pay tuition after the training).

More locally, they are following conversations about bills — remediation, alternative credits. Have an opportunity to study how to thoughtfully continue improvements to support for all students, without selecting one strategy and mandating a one-size-fits-all option. Some proposals would not work for all, so IBHE wants to recognize all the different models that are being used at various institutions. IBHE staff are always grateful to FAC and our colleagues for providing expert advice when needed for these state and national conversations. IBHE staff, particularly Gretchen Lohman, also continue to deal with the catastrophic closing of Argosy earlier this year.

During Q&A, there was more discussion of modernizing forms of instruction. SB indicated that competency based instruction is not a new thing, but resources are an issue. When cost, quality, and access are considered, you typically cannot improve all three. One question is whether we can modularize key learning outcomes to make learning more transparent to students and provide more robust prior learning assessment, particularly to provide a more personalized line of study for the working adult to streamline their degree. Some nationwide institutions that have maximized this have enrollments as large as 100,000. Illinois has some examples and is really exploring this for the early childhood field. The issue of early faculty involvement is well illustrated by this area, where forty faculty fellow from across the state (including Marie Donovan, Chair of FAC, from DePaul) are working on early childhood competency assessments, after a process that worked with employers and faculty to define robust competencies. Concerns were expressed about students who struggle to move ahead or have fundamental issues (such as English) that may prevent them moving ahead in areas where they have more potential experience/competence, and how keeping up with and supporting those students can become an institutional burden. While we hear about the competent adult finishing quickly, that is more the exception than the typical experience – in a competency model, most students take longer and thus requires changing the way we do our work to stay with that student longer.

In working group highlights: Nick Menhart (Biology at IIT)talked about the Illinois Articulation Initiative survey and the need for more comprehensive data rather than anecdote about problems and successes. This led to some discussion about Illinois’ excellent completion after transfer from community colleges and whether that can be considered in retention and success for four-year institutions. Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is putting a General Education Common Core (GECC) credential on transcripts now, which will count as a completion for the CC and help at receiving institutions. With regard to Program Prioritization and Consolidation and support of the liberal arts, discussion ensued of how competencies related to general education (e.g. critical thinking) can be better expressed. Another issue raised was the idea of another paper discussing the implications and economics of cancelling small classes.

During lunch, Ray Schroeder of University of Illinois – Springfield joined the FAC for information conversation about online initiatives and educational technology. He maintains a curated reading list at his website, rayschroeder.com, which also includes a link to his legacy Google site where many presentations are accessible.

Malinda Aiello, Academic Affairs Associate Director, IBHE [note: in June she took a job at ISU as Director of IAI] updated the FAC on the Transitional Math (TM) courses (www.iltransitionalmath.org). The statewide implementation plan should be adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and ICCB at their June Board meetings. Offering TM courses is not required until the fall of 2020, but several high schools will begin offering in fall of 2019 – so colleges could see folks with the transitional math courses as early as Fall 2020. Using IAI as a model, the statewide Transitional Math Portability Panel has been established. TM courses will be submitted to the panel using an iPlacement system (www.iplacement.org) similar to the IAI iManage system. High school math teachers along with college and university math faculty will review course submissions to determine alignment to the state’s criteria for approval as a portable transitional course. Successful completion of these courses will be indicated on the student’s high school transcript, however high school transcripts do not have a statewide format so it may be more difficult to show portability for the time being. IAI course approval criteria are broad in order to prevent panel over-reach and ensure flexibility in terms of course content, instructional approaches, and delivery methods at the college / university level; core competencies, grading policies, instructional requirements, etc. are narrowly and clearly defined for TM courses because these are high school courses. IBHE is working to formalize acceptance of TM courses for placement by four-year schools, which are not required by law to accept the courses. The State will begin working on development and implementation of transitional English courses this summer and fall. This is a more difficult issue than math, since IL students are required to take only three years of math but already take four years of English. During discussion, some concern was expressed about the success of the program, and a comment was made that the transitional math program is already affecting math secondary education programs.

Amy Spies, Academic Affairs Assistant Director, IBHE, discussed the Illinois Open Education Resource initiative. She provided a handout with information about open textbooks that included some peer-reviewed collections; the goal is to create a curated list of OER for the entire General Education curriculum in Illinois. Faculty volunteers are sought to help develop the repository, starting this fall. Initially this will mean a once-a-month meeting, probably as a conference call, and working to review existing materials. To volunteer, contact Amy Spies, spies@ibhe.org, 271-557-7356.

Sophia Gehlhausen Anderson, Academic Affairs Assistant Director, IBHE, discussed responses to the Teach Illinois report and ISBE proposed rule changes to part 25. Among the main areas of concern are 1) allowing an endorsement to be added to an existing license by just passing a content exam rather than requiring any additional coursework; and 2) removing requirements of testing and student teaching prior to granting permission to teach in Illinois to someone licensed in another state. She shared a handout that listed some serious concerns expressed about the proposed Teach Illinois recommendations by various K-12 and higher education focused groups (including the letter from the FAC). ISBE’s Board supported the proposed rule changes presented by the staff and now the proposed changes have moved forward for public comment. The new Governor appointed an entirely new set of Board members to ISBE since the rules were proposed.

Mike Philips (geologist at Illinois Valley Community College and FAC Legislative Liaison) reviewed the conversations that 11 of us in FAC were able to have the day before with an array of legislators: Kelly Burke; Laura Ellman; Carol Ammons (new chair of higher ed committee from Champaign); Dan McConchie; Chris Welch; La Shawn Ford; Bob Morgan; Norine Hammond and Dan Brady; Ed Barberton; Sam Yingling; Elgie Simms, Jr., plus Jesse Ruiz, Assoc Gov; Larry Dietz (president ISU); and we dropped info off at a few other offices. Brady specifically invited FAC folks to speak with the legislative Higher Ed Working Group.

## June 4 FAC Meeting at Northern Illinois University

FAC liaison Gretchen Lohman, Senior Associate Director, Academic Affairs, IBHE reported that Reverse Transfer Administrative Rules would be presented to the IBHE that day. Once approved, the rules will be jointly adopted by ICCB and IBHE. After the approval, the rules go to Joint Committee on Administrative Rules for public comment. Once any changes are made, the final rules will be presented again to the Board in September. Also on state legislation: a joint council was formed to study developmental education (SJR41). HB2152 passed but is subject to appropriation. It requires public universities and community colleges to have a certain level of mental health counseling for the students (based on benchmarks).

Caucuses and working groups planned for next year. In the afternoon, FAC attended the IBHE board meeting, where FAC Chair Marie Donovan gave a short presentation on FAC’s work in the past year.