# November IBHE Faculty Advisory Council Notes

November 16, 2018 at Illinois Wesleyan   
  
By Amy Carr

This meeting was attended by Emily Shupe, WIU’s Alternate to the IBHE Faculty Council. These notes are being written by Amy after conversation with Emily and after seeing the eventual minutes from the November meeting. Quotes are straight from the minutes—not necessarily quotes of speakers *per se—*and lengthy because conversations with all four visitors to FAC may interest the Faculty Senate.

Illinois Wesleyan hosted the meeting, and the Provost, Mark Brodl, said the IWU draws on its small size as a strength to have individualized programs and drawing “students into meaningful academic relationships earlier” through an *optional* First Year Experience program for which students need to apply. Building out of a First-Hear Humanities Fellows program, the optional FYE program that is tied to a course and involves “taking advantage in a thoughtful way of on-campus opportunities such as speakers, taking trips to interact with alumni and professionals, etc.” *All* first-year students are involved in a first-semester Gateway program. And seniors may have a “signature experience” focused on a “student-driven project that reflects their capabilities. An example is a Vietnamese student with a history major but extensive art interests who researched her family’s agricultural history as tea farmers and developed a marketing campaign that would restore some of the historical tea preeminence now that communism is no longer dictating the specific crops and yields that are expected.”

As part of the chair report by Marie Donovan, “[t]here was discussion of the issues related to potential changes in how teacher credentialing is done: concerns about instructor qualifications, content versus credentialing, research evidence for and against various approaches, long term sustainability, and the precedent for and effect on other programs. Part of professionalism is the ethics and community within Illinois.”

Al Bowman, outgoing IBHE Executive Director, said that the IBHE was “aggressive” in its plans for the FY20 budget. “MAP Is one of the biggest need-based programs in the country but still only covers 40% of eligible students. Candidate Pritzker suggested increasing MAP by 50%, which would be 200 million dollars. Higher ed funding is important and the [legislative higher ed] working group is developing plans. The pension ramp is eating up money — $1.8 billion for the SURS contribution this year, more than 200 million more than last year, and 75% of that amount is for old pension liability. The Pritzker campaign talked about possible revenue generators; some revenue generation is essential since possible savings from cuts will not be enough for long term needs.”

” During Q&A, Dr. Bowman:

* Praised Dan Brady as an ally of higher education who works with both parties.
* Stated that there is no conversation about reducing the number of public universities – that would decimate the communities around the institutions, and there is still a need for 12 public universities. Lack of MAP funding has put downward pressure on enrollment but that can be recovered. In particular, Eastern Illinois and some privates such as Quincy have seen significant increases recently. Illinois has kids, but also lots of adults without a degree, and we know future careers require more preparation.
* Agreed that not much is currently being done with regards to a future oriented program to keep HS graduates in Illinois. The higher education working group has been talking about it, and the Aim High program that came from that group was a first step. The General Assembly now realizes they have hurt the higher education sector and that something needs to be done to address enrollment losses. Higher education needs to help find pathways to solutions.
* Suggested that one way the FAC can respond proactively to the teacher shortage (rather than waiting to react to legislation) is to make sure our position is known to the ISBE [Illinois State Board of Education] through folks such as Jason Helfer. The letter that we have copies of is representative of the communication; IBHE is talking to ISBE but it is not clear whether ISBE is listening. Getting the memo written took two weeks and seventeen versions. Part of the concern is ISBE’s need to pay more attention to the underlying causes of teacher shortage (such as the salary bullet that was specifically mentioned). Community colleges participated in part due to their concerns about enrollment erosions.
* Discussed re-building higher education. The FY 20 budget would be a step toward rebuilding the base that has been eroded over the past 20 years. They are looking at questions such as what increases would be necessary to hold tuition steady? To address the 5.4 billion dollars of deferred maintenance? IBHE no longer has the ability to do things such as set enrollment targets or make appropriation adjustments that might address issues of directing students to schools with capacity, etc. That ability was dispersed to institutional governing boards in 1996. While the higher education working group would like IBHE to regain some of that authority, universities are likely to fight that; however, some larger view may be needed. With regard to more immediate responses than the FY 20 budget, enrollment is a key issue. The underperforming programs report and the budget concerns led to a perception of guidance counselors and families that institutions were weakened. We need a governor who is a cheerleader for higher education. California turned their budget woes around and now have a surplus — Illinois could do that too. Chicago is number one for corporate relocations, Illinois is the 6th most populous state, and two-thirds of kids who go out of state for college return to Illinois to work.
* Made it clear that he intends to return to retirement at the end of this year rather than extend his service with the board.”

The five FAC working groups met. In the afternoon, FAC had a conversation with Illinois Representative Dan Brady (R-105), who is on the legislative Higher Education Working Group (HEWG). “During their first meeting last year, they decided the focus had to be on students first. There is a need for legislation that addresses student exodus from Illinois, that works within budget problems, and applies information from students.”

“Two things to accomplish:

1. Education funding assistance for students. HEWG put out six pieces of legislation passed from their group, including the Aim High program, MAP funding issues, and information sharing about university choice for those who don’t get first choice so that they feel wanted within Illinois. This should show people the serious nature of the working group and the ability to get bipartisan work done.
2. Coming up with funding formula for higher education in Illinois. This will be a bigger challenge legislatively because of territoriality. Working group needs to try and “cut the grass evenly” and be as fair as possible. They’ve looked at models from various states.”

“Q & A discussion:

* With performance based funding, universities will need to know their budget pressures, be serious about numbers such as students in classes and costs or benefits to the university, and talk seriously with trustees. There might be initial negative reactions when people react to the funding formulas, but that happened in K-12 districts also. There will be limited dollars. While they are starting with publics, performance based funding will be for more than public four year universities.
* For MAP funding related to private institutions, DB is not the best person to ask as he has focused more on public schools. However, there have been meetings with groups of private schools and it is clear that they do not want to be lost in the situation.
* Part of dealing with negative perceptions due to lists such as those of underperforming programs (especially if there are errors in the lists) is to hype what schools do best and be honest with students about what the best places are for particular degrees.
* FY 19 budget did include long term funding (e.g. for projects to improve college campuses) but not as much as universities want. The higher ed working group did hear a lot about campus appeal from students. The problem is, how do you pay for a major capital budget?
* With regards to the teacher shortage and the role of non-universities, DB indicated that while individuals have been approached, this topic isn’t on the working groups agenda currently – their focus is on funding. The shortage does have to be discussed and addressed. FAC members requested he bring back the idea that Illinois schools have the capacity and flexibility, so supporting out-of-state providers would be a step in the wrong direction and send a poor message about commitment to Illinois institutions.
* No matter what your question is, you’re going to have to dig in and make some people upset because we think what we’re proposing is for the better good of higher education. Prioritization. Look at the pension problem — we can waste time pointing fingers, but what matters is getting it fixed because the problem is here and has to be dealt with. Higher ed funding is similar.
* An eye-opening conversation was with high school guidance counselors about the competitive nature of other states’ recruiting processes and how they benefited while Illinois was down.”

Public, private, and community college caucuses then met, and they and the working groups reported back to the whole.

Then “Dr. Jason Helfer, Deputy Superintendent, Illinois State Board of Education, spoke with the FAC via Zoom phone call about the recommendations in “Teach Illinois Strong Teachers, Strong Classrooms: Policy Solutions to Alleviate Teacher Shortages in Illinois”. Looking specifically at the recommendations about job embedded programs, he pointed out that one pathway requires higher education – the paraprofessionals who do not have a bachelor’s degree. A second group is career changers, particularly those who may not be able to participate in programs remote from their current location. A third group is moving from two-year alternative licensure programs to one-year programs, which used to exist and which public universities have been requesting. There was no intent to limit what people do; often people complain about the amount of regulation from ISBE, and this would be a chance for more flexibility.”

“During Q&A,

* In response to whether the second group would involve higher ed or non-university folks, JH indicated that the state board cannot make the determination of what the pathways will look like. All programs must be held to the same standards – not different standards for different groups – and quality must be maintained. They want to offer options that are not within the current structures and work with their partners.
* He does not believe that statutes would be changed to move licensure out of higher education, but cannot predict 10-15 years down the road.
* In response to inquiries about support for approaches with a good research base that support a diverse work force (such as teacher induction) and the issue of burdens on teacher preparation programs, JH pointed out that some practices such as teacher induction are in the recommendations. When statutes get developed, burdens can change.
* Conflict between easier paths to licensure and perhaps lessened requirements on the one hand and the desire for a better qualified teacher taught by expert teachers on the other was raised. JH said that requirements are not being changed, just how instruction can be delivered. This is not about getting people into the classroom easier – one finding was that does not help students – but about meeting the needs of career changers and paraprofessionals.
* Specific language from the recommendations was read and a request was made for a statement of clarification. Concerns were also expressed about needing to rebuild trust after the way the recommendations were read. JH said he could take the idea for a statement back for others to weigh in on. The next four to five weeks will see clarification of the work stream for these processes. Trust could be rebuilt via conversations.”

In conversation after the call, the “issue of intentions versus language was also raised, since as the people in various positions change, the language is what matters.”

# December IBHE Faculty Advisory Council Notes

Amy Carr

For the December meeting, each of the five FAC working groups met in different locations and spent the entire meeting discussing ideas for their respective activities and/or white papers. Those five working groups are P-20 Outreach, “This We Believe” [about what faculty believe about higher ed], Dual Credit/Regional Dual Credit, Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI), and Program Prioritization and Consolidation.

I attended the Program Prioritization and Consolidation working group at Illinois State University on December 14. I was elected Chair of the working group, and we brainstormed what to include in a white paper, as well as what additional research to pursue in the next month.

Because the fruits of the December working group meetings will be shared and discussed at our next FAC meeting, details will follow in FAC notes of the January meeting.