

Faculty Caucus Minutes
September 13, 2006
(Approved)

Call to Order

The Faculty Caucus was called to order by Chairperson Lane Crothers immediately following the Senate meeting.

Approval of Faculty Caucus Minutes of August 30, 2006

Motion: By Senator Riegle, seconded by Senator Parette, to approve the Faculty Caucus Minutes of August 30, 2006. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Senate Chairperson Position Discussion

Senator Crothers: I wanted to start talking about the succession of Senate leadership, since my applications for sabbatical are in and I won't be returning next year as Chair of the Senate. I wanted for you to begin thinking about the position of Chair. There are a few benefits. You get a half-time buyout from your department, which means that the university transfers half your salary for half your time. You are looking at 1:1 loads for teaching typically, so we are talking about real reallocation. You do get a month's pay in the summer. You have stunning access to the policy makers of the institution. It is a rare day that I don't chat with the Provost. The Senate's fourth-floor location in Hovey Hall is important to its proximity to the administrative offices.

I spend most of my time in committee meetings or in planning committee meetings or thinking about the discussion I am going to be having with various policy makers. That said, there is still plenty of time for research. It is worth pointing out that I have written three books since I became Senate Chair. You do have to learn to work like an administrator sometimes in that if you have an hour between meetings and you have a project you have to work on, you have to learn to work within that hour. The truly busy times were one, when Dr. Boschini resigned and we had to put together the election process for getting people on the search committee. The time when we were working to find a new Provost was very significant because, for the first time, this caucus chose to participate indirectly, but formally, in the process. We wrote a Faculty Caucus statement about who we thought the Provost should be and why. That required a lot of coordination. Finally, during the revisions to the General Education Program, not only did the Academic Affairs Committee work very hard, but there were many conversations going on in my office.

There are a few committees that I spend a fair amount of time on. Once a month, I attend the Provost Advisory Committee meeting. You are a guest there and not really expected to participate, but it is important to go. The Academic Planning Committee is a committee that does program review. I tend to spend a great deal of time on that committee. I think that it is very important. Depending on the year, it can occupy less time. Last year, we only had eight program reviews. The year before, we had 31. The Council of Illinois University Senates was established by Professor White. The membership is the Senate Chairpersons from all public universities in Illinois. Typically, the meetings are hosted here. They have been hosted at UIS and UIUC, but more or less the hub is out of our office. That committee only meets once a semester. Capital Planning, dealing with budget requests, is about once a month. *Educating Illinois* Steering Team is about twice a month. Then you have the Executive Committee and the Planning and Finance Committee of the Senate. That takes up the majority of my Senate work time.

There are a few others that don't take much time. The Diversity Committee has largely gone away. The Enrollment Committee I resigned from because I felt that it was not doing anything meaningful. The Team Excellence Awards meetings are fairly enjoyable. You meet once, you pick winners and then you leave. The Campus Communications Committee makes a statement from the university community before each Board meeting and also does some planning for the 8:00 a.m. discussion hour with the Board. I tried to get that shifted to more of an educational moment. Also, you lead the faculty procession on Founders Day.

Other things that I was involved in were the Athletic Director Search and the Family Campaign planning. I once served for a semester on the Student Health Board. I also served on the Alcohol and Drug Task Force. I attended a meeting in which I was involved in the NCAA changing its rules and I did one public service involving trying to get them to build the hotel downtown.

A lot of the responsibilities that I have taken are the social responsibilities; that is, being there. You get more invitations to the President's house. You will get invitations to sporting and other social events and you end up developing personal relationships with the President, Vice Presidents and the Trustees, as well as elected officials, which, I hope, aids the shared governance processes. You do meet on a bi-weekly basis with the President and Provost. I try to regularly have lunch with Mark Walberg, Technology, and Vice President Steve Bragg. I was once meeting on a regular basis for lunch with the Vice President for University Advancement and the Vice President for Student Affairs; those broke down over time, but it is not a bad idea to continue them.

Part of the 'being there' is being available for consultations that might arise. Those issues can range from "We have run out of this." to "Do you think the faculty will object if we do that?" to personnel matters or other crises where they need to get feedback. It leaves you in a position in which you have to be discreet. A lot of it is rules interpretation. Faculty will call the Senate Chairperson as the first point of contact asking about the process for getting something done. Finally, the fundamental thing is some level of legitimization. . It is different sometimes when the Chair of the Academic Senate says something and when the President says something. Faculty, in particular, tend to be more willing to trust the President if the Chair of the Senate backs the President up. I have chosen to make it a cooperative relationship. Also, there is the access benefit to the President and Provost at your bi-weekly meetings.

Senator Borg: It is an important, visible symbol and I would encourage someone to take it on. There is one revision in the constitution that permits the Chair of the Senate to call a meeting of the general faculty. It used to require a petition. It is an important option.

Senator Wilkinson: What is the nomination process for this? Could you have a completely new member of the Senate serve as Chairperson?

Senator Crothers: The nomination process will be held at the last Senate meeting of this year in April. There will be a caucus before the Senate meeting in which the new and continuing faculty senators will nominate a candidate. The election of the Chairperson will involve the full Senate at that Senate meeting following the caucus. I will conduct that meeting because I am not running for the position. As for a new person serving as Chair, unless they are an old guard person returning, they are not going to know the institution or the issues well enough to do the job.

I just wanted to raise this for consideration. If anyone has any questions, just e-mail or call me and we can talk about it.

Adjournment