

SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MONDAY, MAY 19, 2025
232 ENGLISH BUILDING AND ZOOM
MINUTES

Present: Chair Jon Hale, Vice-Chair Angela Lyons, David Dalpiaz, Hunter Farnham, Steve Hall, Jeffrey Eric Jenkins, Joanne Kaczmarek, Eric Kurt, Ralph Mathisen, Gay Miller, Nolan Miller, Charles Roseman

Ex officio: John Coleman (for R. Jones), H. George Friedman (Presiding Officer of the Senate)

Absent: Maya Crystal, Yvette Johnson-Walker, Sean Murphy, James Quisenberry, Chaya Sandler, Jessica Williams

Guests: William Bernhard (Interim Associate Chancellor and Vice Provost for Budget and Resource Planning), Stephanie Henry (Communications Associate, Office of Strategic Communications and Marketing)

1. CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) was called to order at 3:10 pm with Chair Hale presiding.

2. APPROVAL OF REMOTE PARTICIPATION

No requests received.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

No requests received.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes and closed minutes of the April 21, 2025 meeting were approved as distributed.

5. CHAIR'S REMARKS

Chair Hale congratulated Lyons on her election as SEC Chair for the upcoming year. Hale also acknowledged the many years of service Friedman has provided to the Senate and welcomed him as parliamentarian for the coming year.

6. CHANCELLOR'S REMARKS

Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Coleman noted the transition out of the spring semester and expressed hopes that everyone would find time for rest and relaxation over the summer. Coleman shared that the University just completed a busy

commencement season with 42 ceremonies and 16,000 students graduating over the past academic year.

Coleman reported that undergraduate admissions for the upcoming fall semester look strong. The administration is working closely with University Housing to ensure that the challenges experienced in the previous year are not repeated.

On the federal level, the University has joined two additional lawsuits aimed at compelling the federal government to continue funding active NSF (National Science Foundation) and NEH (National Endowment for the Humanities) grants. These legal actions underscore the importance of sustaining and advocating for the significant research and scholarship taking place across campus.

Provost Coleman acknowledged the upcoming departure of Chancellor Robert Jones, who served as the commencement speaker at the main commencement ceremony. Coleman emphasized that his departure would be a significant loss to the University but stressed the importance of continuing the institution's work. He shared that the search process remains on schedule. If it continues to progress as planned, there should be no need to appoint an interim chancellor. Chancellor Jones is expected to remain on campus beyond his official July 1 departure date.

Vice Chancellors Barry Benson and Sean Garrick have announced their departure from the University. Garrick was the inaugural Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. Interims will serve in both positions.

Coleman noted that the Association of American Universities (AAU) and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) are both involved in various lawsuits challenging federal funding cuts to research at universities. Several institutions have agreed to be named as plaintiffs in these cases hopefully distributing the load if there are repercussions for advocating.

7. OLD BUSINESS

No old business.

8. NEW BUSINESS

a) SC.25.18, Spring Budget Update

Bernhard, Interim Associate Chancellor and Vice Provost for Budget and Resource Planning provided information on the University budget and suggested SEC request a budget update on an annual basis.

Budget sources are comprised of restricted and unrestricted funds. Restricted funds include endowments that usually come with gift agreements, student fees, and sponsored research and federal appropriations. Unrestricted funds include the state appropriations, making up 9% of the overall budget, not including the benefits.

There are challenges from every funding source. Although Governor Pritzker proposed an increased budget for the university, the state's fiscal outlook is not as positive as anticipated. The Adequate and Equitable University Act, or more commonly referred to as the "Illinois Equity Funding Bill" is not likely to pass but still exists and poses a threat to the university's state funding.

State appropriations for capital projects have seen some movement. Although, much of the funding promised has not been received. Some funding for capital projects was received and allowed for breaking ground on the new Illini Hall project

Tuition has been flat for seven of the past ten years for Illinois residents which has made meeting the salary program difficult. The recent tuition increase is only for the incoming first year students with tuition rates guaranteed for four years. With the current geopolitical climate, the current reliance on international student, mostly from China, may not be feasible moving forward if there is a decline in diplomatic relations. If the international students were replaced with resident tuition, it would be a loss of \$115 million.

There has been discussion about ending Pell grants that account for \$64 million of the funding offers proposed to admitted students. There is also rising concern about the uncertainty of continuing to receive federal grant funding. Funding agencies are approving fewer grant proposals and at a much slower rate. The facilities and administration (F&A) rates are usually negotiated by each institution. However, a much lower flat rate of 15% has been proposed. Much of the specialized equipment needed and used by the university is only available from international vendors. With increased tariffs, the cost and availability of specialized equipment also becomes a challenge. Any uncertainty in the market creates volatility and uncertainty about funding provided by donors. Spending must be done cautiously and in a mindful manner.

The mid-course budget correction put the University on a more sustainable financial path. The University is in a better position to handle some of the uncertainties than it was last year. Centrally funded units have had a \$11 million budget decrease, but mission critical funding must remain for things like public safety and Title II of the American Disabilities Act (ADA) which requires digital content to be accessible to

individuals with disabilities. Vice Chancellors have been asked to think more strategically about their portfolios as a whole and prioritizing activities.

Planning for reduced federal funding needs to be a multidimensional approach while making sure students and the educational mission remain a priority and are not damaged by federal changes. Each strategy has an impact, and it is important not to make a short-term decision that creates long-term damage.

Potential strategies and actions include limiting and avoiding future expenditures, limiting hiring to mission critical positions and requiring additional justification, and targeted retirement incentives rather than across the board. Sustained small increases in tuition have been proposed with slightly more aggressive increases for non-residents.

The current Integrated and Value-Centered Budgeting (IVCB) is effective in distributing funds to where they are most needed. Predictable and reliable policies offer stability and any potential changes to this model need to be carefully thought through and include stakeholder feedback.

ICR (indirect cost recovery) distribution policy may need to be re-evaluated if the federally proposed flat F & A rate goes into effect. Program or office eliminations or permanent funding reductions would be a worst-case scenario and last resort.

Bernhard added that forecasting and modeling are being used to look at the best- and worst-case scenarios. Some scenarios are easier to model than others. A reduction in federal funding comes with a wider set of impacts and uncertainty. Impact varies across units. Some have little to no federal funding and would not be as affected as those with higher levels of federal funding. Any reductions must be made strategically and thoughtfully to meet priorities and determine what is critical to the core mission. Units must determine the most important aspects of that unit and ensure they are aligned with the University's mission.

b) Volunteer Needed: Urbana Observer to the Board of Trustees Meeting on July 16-17, 2025

Jenkins volunteered to serve as the Urbana Senate Observer.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:23 pm.

Jenny Roether
Clerk of the Senate