

# GRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL

# **UIC** UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO

## **MEETING MINUTES** **FEBRUARY 16TH, 2010**

### **5:30- 5:35 PM: Introduction**

*President, Zoe Hoepfner*

### **5:35-6:10 PM: Frank Goldberg (Discussion on tuition issues)**

*Vice-Provost for Resource Planning and Management*

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- I'll begin by setting the context of this uncertain and dynamic period
- Our fiscal year 2009 (FY09) (July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009) had a 2.5% increase in state appropriation in our budget put by Gov. Pat Quinn. This was right before the economy tanked and considered that revenue assumptions would hold up over fiscal year. The university held back half of that in case the state would call for rescission.
- Summer 2008, the economy tanked. The state called back 2.5% and the university could make the rescission. We bill the state as we incur expenses – at the end of FY09 the state was still \$120 million behind in payments to the university. There was concern of whether we would get paid by the state.
- The FY10 budget restored the 2.5% increase and was the same budget as FY09. But the state started the year \$120 million in the hole. In the middle of September we received the last payment of FY09 budget – 1/3 into FY10 and we hadn't received the new year's money.
- As of January 2010, the state was \$461 million behind in payments to the university for FY10. The state has a serious cash flow problem. We don't know what will happen this year, next year.
- The university is making plans for a significant decrease in budget - having purchasing units (ex: colleges) produce plans for managing with a potential 3.5% / 7% / 10.5% cut in our budget. We are planning under uncertainty.
- The total budget for the University of Illinois is \$1.8 billion. \$1.3 billion is "restricted" – grants, contracts, payments to hospital – i.e. only to be used for the purposes that it was given for. \$530 million is "unrestricted" – the teaching and instruction budget.
- To manage this year the university kept \$45 million aside (UIC share was \$18 million). Through university-wide furloughs we expect to save \$17 million. We are planning for reduced state funding next year.
- Our "unrestricted" budget - State appropriation \$290 million and tuition \$250 million. At UIC, and public universities nationally, state contributions to the educational process has decreased over the last 10 years. The burden goes to families and students.

- That's the context – the university is navigating uncertain times, maintaining academic and teaching excellence and continuing its growth trajectory. We've managed over the last five years because of increased faculty research, entrepreneurship on campus and families.

Eduardo Bustamante (Kinesiology): Do the tuition payments go to the state then come back to the university?

FG: Tuition is held locally at the university level. That process is not longer employed in a number of states.

Julie Fountain (History): The money the university has set aside – is that if we don't get state funding?

FG: Yes.

Nick Ardinger (Urban Education Policy): Is the \$461 million that the state owes all unrestricted money for our budget?

FG: Yes, all unrestricted for the University of Illinois as a whole.

Zoe (GSC President): We've had questions about the tuition differential and understand a bit about the process - set by deans of colleges. How does your office deal with them? And how come UIC has differentials and UIUC doesn't?

FG: UIUC has tuition differentials. More than half of UIUC students have to pay it. UIUC pioneered differentials with >\$4000/year for engineering.

The differential phenomenon has risen across the states – because states have been backing away from public education or it is lower in priority when funds are allocated.

About the process: differentials get proposed by colleges "in consultation" with students. The proposal is made to the Provost who reviews it, and takes a decision to the Chancellor. The Chancellor reviews the decision and takes it to the Board of Trustees, which votes on it each year when they vote on tuition – changing or removing differentials.

Zoe (GSC President): Would a differential increase go hand in hand with a tuition increase?

FG: Proposals range the gamut – no/small/large change.

Harish (GSC Treasurer): At UIUC grant money can cover the tuition differentials. Why is that not so here?

FG: Different policies are in effect in different colleges – so those deans would be making decisions – things bubble up from there.

Zoe (GSC President): When does tuition go to the Board of Trustees for a vote?

FG: I don't know. Administrators would like the Board of Trustees to vote in March but they might in June, or later. Yes, tuition will be increased but we don't know by how much. UI President Stanley Ikenberry said at the January Board of Trustees meeting that there might be 9.5% increase in tuition.

Nick Ardinger (Urban Education Policy): How does the new Board of Trustees compare to old one in terms of their approach to getting money from state.

FG: We have Stanley Ikenberry, the interim President who is more willing to engage the state over issues of financing the university. I don't know if the Board of Trustees will follow suit.

Nick Ardinger: Have you seen anything to indicate so?

FG: I've attended 2 meetings and it's too early to tell. The new board members have shown interest in learning about the university and its issues. How they will act in the public arena is hard to say? The job of a trustee is very difficult – you represent and need to balance 2 interests: the institution and the public.

Q: We may or may not have new governor this year. How will that impact next year's budget in terms of the state taking more money back?

FG: Being appropriately apolitical I can say that through the entire trauma there has been no indication that the state is trying to balance its budget on the back of the university.

Scott Morgan (Psychology): Given the possible tuition increase, would there be a change in the policy about waivers not covering the increase?

FG: Tuition waiver policy is to waive it all.

Q: There is less top-down release of information to students about what you just shared – but there was good information on furloughs and why they were employed. How can we get such information?

FG: There are official messages from the Chancellor or Provost about the budget. Yes, this is a shared problem – faculty, administrators and students – so there should be more transparency. Students can make an impact when informed of situations/problems. For instance, the MAP grant – the state wasn't funding it so undergrads lobbied and had a significant impact on legislature.

Some links for information updates:

<http://www.uic.edu/index.html/Chancellor/messages.shtml>

<http://www.uillinois.edu/president/speeches.cfm>

<http://www.uic.edu/depts/oa/bpa/>

Chris Pelzmann (Mechanical Engineering): Do you know the total debt the state is in or the amount of deficit right now?

FG: I don't know numbers. I have heard the deficit is \$10 million. The state has a serious cash flow problem – how far behind they are on payments. The structural deficit is a larger problem – that's the difference between revenues coming in and budget spent. I have heard that even increasing taxes won't solve it. The continuous flow of revenue determines the success of organization.

Q: How confident/worried are you that the amount owed will be paid?

FG: I'm hopeful.

Q: Is the university interested in decoupling from state finances?

FG: So, state appropriation to the university is about \$743 million with \$290 million being UIC's share. Multiply that by 20 to get the amount of endowment we'd need to make do without state funding.

At UIC its ½ and UIUC < ½ "unrestricted" funds come from state.

Q: What are the ways of increasing revenue?

FG: There have been significant entrepreneurial endeavors on campus. For instance, the College of Pharmacy has some programs that are businesses that serve our community and provide revenue. But, we are a not-for-profit organization so this is limited.

Q: What about taking more out-of-state students? How will all this impact hiring and tenure?

FG: UIUC, as the largest public university in the state has a small portion of nonresident students (10-11%) whereas at Wisconsin that number is 25% (it's a state law that they can't go over that %). The state of Illinois didn't take kindly to UIUC's plan to increase nonresident students. After all, the state funds the university to teach children of residents of Illinois. Wisconsin realized that out-of-state students help fund in-state students.

In November 2008 President White imposed a hiring slow down. In January 2010 Interim President Ikenberry imposed a hard freeze on hiring. That will go on till all budget reduction plans from purchasing units are received – that will impact tenure and hiring. The university has to control expenditures by reducing spending.

## **6:10-6:30 PM: Timothy Opgenorth (discussion on financial aid issues)**

*Director, Financial Aid*

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- Handout-distributed.
- Students need to complete FAFSA every year – that's how we award aid – on a yearly basis. For next year we highly recommend filling it by March 1.
- We still need to know tuition so the amount of your aid gets processed once tuition set.
- In your award breakdown you might see costs of transportation, books and other expenses that may not apply to you but these are averages across Chicago colleges used to determine the amounts of awards.
- There are 3 types of financial aid – most of your funding is loans.
- Waivers are processed and paid to your account by us – the departments get information to HR and then our office (is the last one to know information) and we process it. We pay financial aid 10 days before the semester starts. If we are notified on September 7<sup>th</sup> (this is related to last year's problems with late processing of appointments) that you get tuition waiver – then we might need to pull back loans and return funds to the federal government. It would be helpful if you let us know if you have other funding – better to handle it before.
- Student loans – the majority is federal funding. The federal government is also going through budget issues. "Unsubsidized" loans – you pay interest. "Subsidized" loan – you don't pay interest while in school. There's talk that in 2014-5 they might make all graduate loans unsubsidized. If so, graduate students will be informed and can petition legislators and policy makers.

- I highly discourage taking private loans – between subsidized and unsubsidized loans you can get all you probably need for graduate school. A lot of banks charge 14-15% interest rates and high fees. Financially, that's a bad option.
- We are now just doing e-letters for awards. For 2010-11 we are also going with electronic notifications for everything. Check your email for award letters, tax forms etc.
- There was a question about what the minimum eligibility to qualify for loans is. It's at least 6 credits for professional students and 5 credits for graduate students.

Stephen Davis (Anthropology): Can you elaborate on that? There's confusion on whether "full-time" graduate student status is needed to get financial aid.

TO: There's no clear answer. Some programs consider 12 credit hours "full-time", some 9. For financial aid – for any federal fund – the hours I mentioned before is enough – it's technically half-time enrollment. For some waivers students need 12 or 9 credits. It varies program by program for waivers.

Jason Saavedra (Urban Planning and Policy): What about the Public Service Loan Forgiveness offered by the Federal Direct Loan program?

TO: Issues about repayment of loans changes daily. We don't get into payment options when you graduate – you would have to contact the Refinancing Center (<http://www.usfsc.uillinois.edu/loans.html>). Repayment plan timelines vary from profession to profession.

Q: Has your budget risen in the graduate level?

TO: No budget. The federal government gives money for graduate loans. At the undergraduate level our budget is increased but it's not meeting student needs.

Q: Why is there a 2% charge to use a credit card/debit card to pay?

TO: That is handled by the Office of Business and Financial Services (<http://www.obfs.uillinois.edu/>). The 2% reimburses the university because the credit company charges 2% and if you didn't pay that then the university does. So the university is not making money, it's just breaking even.

Kim Stallings (Earth & Environmental Sciences): Does financial aid eligibility assessment include differentials?

TO: Yes, they use it to calculate the amount students can borrow.

Stephen Davis (Anthropology): Are there people in particular to meet with graduate students – we have special budgetary considerations like dependants, etc.

TO: Professional staff are at the front counter of our office. We have 7 counselors who are up there. We cater to 26,000 students on campus.

### **Travel Award Policy change:**

Deana (GSC Vice President): We will accept scanned travel award information just make sure file size is not too big.

Harish (GSC Treasurer): Our fax machine is working. Just need to dial last 5 numbers when faxing within campus.

### **6:30-6:45 PM: Project award application review and voting**

#### **History – Julie Fountain**

- Graduate conference is in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year– 24 people on panel. 6 from UIC, 2 from Canada, 1 from Boston, etc. We had 60 attendees last year.
- Drawing from large population – growth! Different disciplines/subject matter.
- Keynote speaker – from Loyola.

MAJORITY vote – Accepted!

#### **Disability Studies – Alyson Patsavas**

- Kenny Frees: author/poet to give a workshop in writing.
- 1 hr – 1:30 hour on March 18<sup>th</sup>, most likely from 2pm-3:30pm.
- \$1250 total cost – \$1000 for honorarium.
- Nick Ardinger (Urban Education Policy): He is not local? The speaker could be put up in Campus Housing for free. Contact me.
- AP: His travel + living expenses are covered by another organization.
- Steve Davis (Anthropology): 1 hour is a short workshop – would we be able to get more time with him?
- AP: Yes he's in town till that Saturday so we could arrange other things.

MAJORITY vote – Accepted!

#### **Physiology + Biophysics – Domenico Taglieri**

- We want to create science library – we have 10-15 books currently.
- Science students + anyone interested in science can avail these books.
- Q: Where is the library and how can other grads use it?
- DT: It's in the Dept. of Physiology & Biophysics. The idea is to make it interdepartmental.
- Zoe: Have u looked at collaborating with GEMS science library? But you can't check books out there.
- DT: No, but here books would be given on a first-come-first-served basis for an unlimited time.
- Nick Ardinger: Have you talked to the librarian in charge of library section related to your program?
- DT: No.
- Zoe: These are books associated with coursework – do you have assurance that professors will continue using these? How consistently have they used these books in those courses? What's the time line of usage?
- DT: We can ask faculty not to change books unless necessary.
- Zoe: Does Biological Sciences (on East Campus) use the same books?
- DT: I don't know.

Vote: 20 Yes, 22 No, 2 Abstentions

Majority vote – Declined!

#### **Linguistics – Sarah Downey**

- "Talks in Linguistics" are held on Fridays with 5-7/semester. Graduate students in Linguistics in the Spanish department organize it. We have 3

- graduate student sessions – “works in progress” talks. We host visiting professors from the area and cover topics in cognitive science, psychology, linguists, anthropology, educational policy and others.
- This funding is to help cover travel and lodging for a speaker/linguist from MIT.
- Q: If this is an ongoing project - why should GSC fund this one? What will he be speaking abt.
- SD: He’s talking about syntax.
- Juan Martinez (Sociology): What’s the website? If it’s open to graduate students, how do we learn about it?
- SD: We send out announcements on our listservs – and people who say they are interested in it. Website:  
[http://www.uic.edu/depts/sfip/UIC\\_TiL/UIC\\_TiL.shtml](http://www.uic.edu/depts/sfip/UIC_TiL/UIC_TiL.shtml)
- Juan Martinez: I recommend putting it on UIC Announce.
- Nick Ardinger (Urban Education Policy): The speaker could be put up in Campus Housing for free. Contact me.

Vote: 6 Abstentions

Majority vote: Accepted!

### **6:45-close: Old Business**

- CampusCare Advisory Board (Zoe) – our Campus Care fee will be the same next semester and out health fees will decrease slightly.
- Student Centers Board (Deana) – The Office of Sustainability is training people to audit buildings to lower energy costs. If you are interested in that, contact Deana ([dlewis25@uic.edu](mailto:dlewis25@uic.edu)). Also, they are reviewing graduation regalia so graduates can rent gowns from the bookstore.
- Call for Nominations – You can nominate yourself or anyone you know to be an officer of the GSC for next year. We are accepting them now.
- Status update on drafted resolutions – We sent them out for review and can vote at the next meeting.

Stephen Davis (Anthropology): Since the resolutions are about time-critical matters, they should be voted on before our next meeting. I motion we vote on them (online or somehow) in the next 5 days.

Nick Ardinger (Urban Education Policy): Second

### **Motion passed.**

Zoe (GSC President): You will get emails in the next few days about voting on the resolutions.

### **GSC Meeting Dates Spring 2010**

March 16<sup>th</sup>

April 20<sup>th</sup>