

MINUTES<sup>1</sup>  
UNIVERSITY SENATES CONFERENCE

DATE: Monday, May 24, 2021

PLACE: Videoconference

PRESENT: Brennan, Campbell, Dallesasse, Danziger, De Groote, Dutta, Erricolo, Fisher, Jenkins, Kar (Vice Chair), Maher, Razfar, Span, Stroschio, Varden, Wade (Chair)

ABSENT: Hunt, Steinberg, Strahle, Zhan

GUESTS: Nicholas Burbules, Avijit Ghosh, Robert Jones, Farid Peiravian, Celest Weuve, Barbara Wilson, Robin Wilson

Professor Wade, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

I. Meeting with Executive Vice President Wilson and Vice President Ghosh

Professor Wade congratulated Executive Vice President Wilson on her appointment to become the next President of the University of Iowa and commented on the legacy she would leave here at the University of Illinois.

Executive Vice President (EVP) Wilson thanked Vice President (VP) Ghosh for taking time out of his vacation to join the USC meeting to talk about COVID and the budget.

EVP Wilson said that one of the initiatives she is most proud of, and hopes continues, is the Distinguished Faculty Hiring Program. It began three years ago when U of I faculty were getting poached by other institutions during Illinois' budget impasse. So far, 24 high reputation, big impact faculty have been hired among the three universities. Funds are provided for start-up costs, not salary. There needs to be a salary line in place. VP Ghosh commented that it is a great program that he is committed to continuing.

EVP Wilson discussed other initiatives she has been excited about. The Op Ed Fellows Program started two years ago with a cohort of 20. Tenured faculty work for a year with journalists to get their published pieces of work into national news outlets. Celebrating the Arts and Humanities provides funding for projects that involve partnerships with communities to elevate the arts and humanities into the public sphere. The first round received 52 applications of which 14 projects were funded. The second round will be announced soon. The President's Executive Leadership Program (PELP) is a great leadership opportunity. Each cohort provides a slot for a USC member. The group travels to all three universities and to Washington, D.C. In addition to providing leadership skills, PELP has inspired joint programs and leadership projects. Another achievement has been the ramping up of statewide recruitment for undergraduate students. The system hosts these big events along with other regional public institution, with one goal being to keep students in Illinois for college.

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<sup>1</sup>Subject to approval at the University Senates Conference meeting of June 24, 2021

One initiative that was just getting off the ground when the pandemic hit was a women's leadership program. EVP Wilson described this initiative as one she was most proud of. A system-wide symposium was being planned. EVP Wilson said that there is work to do on the low number of women who are in dean and department head positions. The program would focus on breaking down barriers and setting up networking.

USC members gave words of appreciation and provided comments on some of the programs. EVP Wilson was asked about her thoughts on the state of shared governance. She said that, early on in her career here, it was apparent that the University of Illinois had strong shared governance. As she became more involved in Urbana and then system shared governance, she has seen it become more vibrant and collaborative. EVP Wilson commented that it is important to bring in new people and get new voices. She feels that partnerships and relationships between faculty and leaders are as strong as ever. She added that shared governance requires work and can quickly be broken.

EVP Wilson was thanked for all of her efforts in getting people together to work on the overall statutory revisions process. She stressed the importance of the governing documents and how they need to be changed carefully.

VP Ghosh said that the campus protocols for COVID testing will change in the fall when more people are vaccinated. Each university either has or will be sending out messages. The system is waiting for state and public health announcements to help determine whether vaccination will be mandatory for students.

There is SHIELD Illinois testing in about 110 different sites across the state, with around 50,000 tests done each week. The testing is mostly paid for by the state and federal grants. Costs should be covered, and if there is robust testing there might be some excess funds. VP Ghosh said that the saliva test can detect different variants of the virus. The group discussed ways that the system is providing testing and vaccination services to communities and how more could be done.

EVP Wilson said that the goal is to be back on the ground in the fall. Plans do not include moving forward with continual virtual life. Things are changing quickly. The chancellors and UI Health are in daily contact with the state.

EVP Wilson commented that VP Ghosh will be a great Executive Vice President. She said that with his experiences, he can think of finances in terms of academic goals.

Professor Wade welcomed Robin Fretwell Wilson, Director of the Institute of Government and Public Affairs (IGPA). Director Wilson said that IGPA began in 1947 by act of the legislature and by approval of a Board of Trustees resolution. IGPA puts scholars and their research in the same room with policymakers.

IGPA has had an explosive growth since its reorganization and a retreat in 2018. 150 scholars have been engaged across the three universities since the reorganization of IGPA. There are many task forces and working groups that have produced a large number of reports. There have been 25 evidence-based reports on the impact of COVID.

Director Wilson said that there are no longer tenure lines in IGPA. Instead, faculty have a 0% appointment with IGPA. The new model allows more flexibility. Many collaborations might not have happened without IGPA being part of the system. She highlighted some of the many reports and projects that have come out of IGPA. Working group topics include fiscal health, education and early learning, substance use disorders and behavioral health, and equity, justice, and human flourishing. One impact study was on COVID behind bars. She gave examples of policy spotlights: child care as the foundation for economic recovery; ensuring child safety during the pandemic; the unfolding crisis in the satisfaction and supply of teachers in Illinois; and the impact on state revenue is not as severe as feared. Director Wilson stressed the importance of putting scholars in conversation with policymakers. She mentioned a property tax relief tax force. Director Wilson commented that IGPA is non-partisan.

Director Wilson said the IGPA's new flexible model of engaging scholars across the system has massively expanded its footprint. Anyone who is interested in being part of a working group and becoming a collaborative scholar will be considered and matched with a working group.

Director Wilson described the Discovery Partners Institute as a key connector across the system. She said that IGPA and DPI have had discussion on how the two entities might collaborate.

The group discussed ways to provide faculty development opportunities and enhance community engagement. Director Wilson said that there can be plenty of data, but there sometimes needs to be a personal story before it gets the traction to actually make a change. She commented that none of the work of IGPA matters if we do not make people's lives better.

EVP Wilson commented that Robin is an amazing leader who has galvanized IGPA in its role as an engine of policy work. She thanked USC for its consultation role in the early stages or reorganizing IGPA. EVP Wilson asked USC members to let their colleagues know about IGPA if they might be interested in being a part of its policy work.

(The meeting recessed at 12:05 p.m. and resumed 1:00 p.m.)

## II. Chancellor Robert Jones

Chancellor Jones thanked USC members for their outstanding service during one of the most difficult times in recent history. He appreciated faculty being engaged with the system and campus offices.

Chancellor Jones provided a brief overview of the past year. In the early stages of the pandemic, classes changed from face-to-face to virtual. The semester finished successfully. He thanked the faculty for their role. The quick response was followed by a reimagining of every aspect of how to move forward. It was clear that the majority of students wanted to be back in some format. Decisions were made based on the health and safety of our students and faculty. Chancellor Jones was proud that UIUC was able to keep students safe with multi-disciplinary strategies. Carle Illinois Medicine, Vet Med, Engineering, and others

delivered the saliva-based testing and contact tracing, which allowed our universities to be safe. This model was made available across the state and throughout the country and world. He said there are close partnerships with Champaign County.

Chancellor Jones said that he was pleased with the hybrid learning model. The four major steps were carried out – apply, accepted, arrive, and graduate. While the virtual graduation was not the same, many students were happy with the video stage crossings that took place. A lot of effort was put into making the event happen.

Chancellor Jones commented on the very low positivity rates at UIUC. Testing will continue throughout the summer. The current plan for fall is for students, faculty, and staff to be able to opt-out of testing if they have been vaccinated. Those not vaccinated will have to provide a negative COVID test result. CDC guidelines will be followed once they have been issued. A SHIELD team survey found that 90% of students say that they intend to be vaccinated or have been vaccinated already. The number of fully vaccinated students is approaching 80%.

Chancellor Jones said that once we move from the Bridge Phase to Stage 5, we will be able to lift restrictions on the size of gatherings. However, decisions will need to be made on the supply and inventory of classrooms. Offering classes in-person for 200 students or more would be a logistical problem. The Chancellor discussed mental health issues. The system has provided some resources. There is advanced telemedicine, more counselors, a central website with a single point of contact, self-help groups, and a program offered by the Faculty and Staff Assistance Program. He commented that we need to scale up programs.

The group discussed the challenges of large gatherings, such as classes and full senate meetings. Chancellor Jones said that we do not have the flexibility to flip everything to face-to-face immediately. Some rooms cannot be used because of poor ventilation systems. There will be ongoing conversations about returning to an in-person environment. The U of I system has used a very flexible approach with students, faculty, and staff.

Chancellor Jones commented that one of the most important issues right now is that we have some sense of assurance that most of our community will be vaccinated. Analysis show that unless there are high levels of vaccinations, there will be high levels of COVID infections. COVID is not behind us; we need to continue to treat this time as a pandemic. All it takes is one variant that is more resistant to take us backwards. We will need to continuously evaluate the fall semester based on CDC guidelines and make evidence-based decisions. The Chancellor said we can look forward to other lessons learned by leveraging the knowledge and innovations discovered during this time.

### III. Approval of University Senates Conference Minutes of April 28, 2021

Professor Kar moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Professor Brennan and approved unanimously.

### IV. Remarks from the USC Chair

Professor Wade discussed the transition from EVP Wilson to interim EVP Ghosh. She also commented on the recent CDC guidelines.

V. USC Committee of the Whole Discussion: Follow-up items from morning session

USC discussed moving forward based on state and CDC guidelines while also observing local restrictions and having reasonable safety measures. The group discussed how USC would meet this coming academic year, taking into considerations OMA regulations.

Explanation of File Numbers

ST - University of Illinois *Statutes*

GR - *The General Rules Concerning University Organization and Procedure*

NC - Nominating Committee

OT - All other items

VI. Old Business - Action Items

1. ST-84. Proposed Revisions to the *Statutes*, Article VIII, Section 4 – Changes in Existing Units. Passed UIUC Senate 11/12/18. Transmitted to Senates 12/18/18. Revised UIUC Senate document 4/22/19. Transmitted to UIC and UIS Senates 5/7/19. Passed UIS Senate 8/30/19. Passed with amendments UIC Senate 1/30/20. UIC Senate amendments transmitted to UIS and UIUC Senates 3/2/20. Passed UIS Senate 4/3/20. Passed with amendments UIUC Senate 4/27/20. Reconciled language approved by USC 5/29/20. Reconciled language to Senates 6/2/20. UIUC Senate USSP response 6/5/20. UIC SEC response 6/10/20. UIS Senate response 4/30/21.

Professor De Groote reported that the Statutes and Governance Committee recommends moving the reconciled language forward to the President. All three senates were in agreement on retaining a line that had been proposed for removal. A recommendation from the UIUC USSP Committee was editorial and did not seem to require that the language be sent back to the other two senates.

Professor Burbules clarified that there are two kinds of renaming: academic and reorganization renaming that already exists in the *Statutes*, and donor naming, which does not change the mission of the unit.

Professor De Groote moved to transmit the proposed revisions to the President. Professor Kar seconded the motion, which was approved by voice vote.

2. OT-372. Proposal to establish a consultation process for system policies. Sent to Executive Vice President Wilson 2/3/21. Response from Executive Vice President 5/6/21.

Professor Wade commented that the document provided by EVP Wilson lists all the different stakeholders in the various system-wide policies. The document will be adopted at some point. USC needs to consider how its document relates to the system policy, whether as an addendum or appendix, as part of the USC Bylaws, or some other way.

USC members considered creating an *ad hoc* committee to look at the two documents and determine how to move forward. Members appreciated that President Killeen and EVP

Wilson are always very thoughtful about seeking advice from USC, even when it was not required. There was also acknowledgement that the consultation process needs to be useful, worthwhile, and timely. The group also discussed the importance of USC regularly communicating with the senates, such as through a liaison USC member for each senate.

## VII. New Business

### 3. USC Observer to Board of Trustees meeting:

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Livestream or Chicago

TBD

## VIII. Old Business – Information and Discussion Items

### 4. OT-27. Nominating Committee for 2021-2022 Officers, Executive Committee, and USC Committees.

Professor De Groote, Chair, reported that the Nominating Committee is seeking nominations.

### 5. OT-326. USC Presentations to the Board of Trustees.

Professor Wade said that she is scheduled to give the USC Chair's annual report to the Board on July 22. She discussed some of her thoughts on the report. USC members provided advice.

### 6. OT-381. Review of the Process for Revising the *Statutes*.

Professor Wade reported that the Board plans to consider statutory revisions once a year, unless there is a revision that requires a more timely approval.

### 7. ST-83. Revisions to the *Statutes* – new proposed revisions and proposed revisions from ST-77 that need further discussion (B File). Sent to the Executive Vice President 5/1/20.

Professor De Groote commented that there was nothing new to report.

### 8. ST-85. Proposed Revisions to the *Statute*, Article X, Section 1 (Tenure of Academic Staff) (a) 6 and 7 – to permit the use of five-year appointments for non-tenure track faculty. Passed UIC Senate 4/22/20. Transmitted to UIS and UIUC Senates 5/1/20. Passed UIUC Senates 3/8/21. Passed UIS Senate 3/26/21. Transmitted to the President 4/5/21.

No new information.

### 9. ST-86. Proposed Revisions to the *Statutes*, Article III, Sections 3 and 5, and Article VI – Dean, Director, or Campus Librarian. Passed UIUC Senate 4/27/20. Transmitted to UIC and UIS Senates 5/1/20. Passed UIC Senates 10/21/20. Passed UIS Senate 4/9/21. Transmitted to President 5/5/21.

No new information.

## 10. OT-123. University Senates Conference Guests.

The Conference discussed guests to invite to future meetings.

## 11. Report of USC Observer to Board of Trustees meeting:

Thursday, May 20, 2021

Livestream

Magic Wade

## 12. University Updates.

Professor De Groote reported that interviews for the new UIC Provost have been completed. Professor Fisher reported that the comprehensive reorganization process of academic units at UIS continues under the interim chancellor.

13. OT-142. External Groups with USC Representatives: Discovery Partners Institute Executive Committee (Jeffrey Eric Jenkins, Aria Razfar); Enrollment Management Policy Council (Magic Wade); President's Executive Leadership Program (Sandra De Groote); Student Mental Health Services Summit Working Group (Cecil Hunt); System-wide Digital Accessibility Policy (Magic Wade); U of I System Going Forward: Excellence Amid COVID-19 Steering Committee (John Dallesasse); University of Illinois System President's Advisory Council (Michael Stroschio).

DPI EC: Professor Razfar said that the group is in the process of electing a chair. Professor Jenkins said that the group is dealing with how to stagger the initial appointments. There have been discussion about pedagogy and adding society and public policy as another DPI component. Also discussed was the DPI business model. Professor Stroschio said there was an interesting discussion on a cost-sharing policy.

EM: Professor Wade said that the committee discussed enrollment numbers.

DAP: Professor Wade said that there is still a lot to know about the implications of the policy. Any licensed vendors will need to meet certain criteria.

PELP: Professor De Groote said that the group has only met virtually so far but plans travel to D.C. along with the next PELP cohort. Professor Wade said that USC will need to select someone for the next PELP cohort.

## 14. Reports from USC Committee Chairs:

Academic Affairs and Research Committee  
Finance, Budget and Benefits Committee  
Statutes and Governance Committee

Aria Razfar  
Roy Campbell  
Sandy De Groote

FBBC: Professor Campbell commented that the meeting focused on sports funding.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.