



THE SYSTEM CONNECTION

Greetings:

With the election (finally) in the rear-view mirror, we all are reading the tea leaves to get a sense of what comes next in so many areas of society. Regardless of how you may feel about the outcome of the presidential race, the fact is our democratic republic will remain strong and we watch with the rest of the country as we move through a presidential transition for the good of the country.

I am working on this installment of the *Connection* while attending the Association of Public & Land-Grant Universities' annual meeting. About 1,400 senior leaders from public universities around the country are here, and as you might expect, we all are talking about the future of public HIED under a Donald Trump administration.

Our challenge is that President-elect Trump offered few clues during the campaign about his views of higher ed. He did devote a portion of a speech in mid-October to HIED, saying he was concerned about student debt and that he favored income-based repayment systems. He did say he wants to force colleges and universities to cut tuition, and that he would end the tax-exempt status of colleges and universities with large endowments that are not using those funds to reduce tuition.

The simple fact is we just don't know what to expect. A piece in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* offered an apt summary: "Mr. Trump has certainly given ammunition to both doubters and optimists. On the one hand, he has rejected the scientific consensus on climate change and on vaccines, and threatened the future for many foreign citizens in the United States. On the other, he has offered support for the federal role in funding research, especially as it concerns human health and alternative fuels."

Here are some of the key topics of conversation at the APLU gathering:

- Trump's emphasis on economic growth may suggest a focus on the research enterprise. There could be some funding opportunities among the "acronym" collection of federal research agencies (e.g., NSF, NIH). Two potential downsides: Previously enacted non-defense spending caps on many federal funds may limit research funding increases; and a possible increase in the politicization of science could adversely affect funding in certain fields, such as climate science and stem cell research.
- There may be an opportunity to make the case for additional Pell Grant funds, including year-round grants, which would create greater opportunities for lower-income students, part of a demographic group that appeared to strongly support President-elect Trump.
- With so many states, including Illinois, disinvesting in HIED, there may be potential for a state-federal partnership. In exchange for increased federal support, universities would commit to increasing the number of degrees awarded to under-represented groups -- with states deciding on the performance improvements by universities.
- Future immigration policies could have a significant impact on international enrollments. Advisors at SIUE have been talking with concerned students, and at SIUC, the Center for International Education has created an ad hoc committee to examine potential impacts of the election on international students and visiting scholars.
- There also is great uncertainty for DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) students; 20 are enrolled at SIUC, 37 at SIUE. The DACA program, created in 2012 through an executive order by President Obama, gives young undocumented immigrants protection from deportation and a work permit. The program expires after two years, subject to renewal. As you can well imagine, the APLU attendees from states such as California, Texas, Florida, New York and other large states are quite concerned about immediate changes that could happen in this area.
- Changes also are possible in the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, specifically with enforcement policies and the possible demand for Title IX regulations, rather than the "Dear Colleague" letter that mandates how campuses respond to sexual assault cases. Some of those attending the APLU conference anticipate the Trump administration will view OCR enforcement strategies with increasing skepticism.

As is the case in Washington, changes are afoot in Springfield -- specifically in what I refer to as the SIU legislative delegation. Congratulations to Dale Fowler, who defeated Sen. Gary Forby, and Dave Severin, who will replace Rep. John Bradley. Sen. Forby and Rep. Bradley have been strong advocates for SIUC in the General Assembly, and we look forward to working with the new office-holders. Special thanks to Sen. Dave Luechtefeld, who is retiring, for his many efforts on SIUC's behalf. I look forward also to working with his replacement, Paul Schimpf of Waterloo.

Congratulations also to our own Katie Stuart, who defeated Rep. Dwight Kay to become the newest member of the SIU delegation. We appreciated Rep. Kay's support of the university, and anticipate working closely with Ms. Stuart.

One more election-related item ... In the aftermath of this very divisive presidential campaign, isolated instances of intolerance have occurred on the SIUC and SIUE campuses, as well as on social media. Both chancellors have indicated that every incident will be reviewed and that appropriate action will be taken. We all can agree that freedom of speech is fundamental to who we are as a university. But hate speech and intolerance are unacceptable, and I hope all members of our faculty and staff will continue to emphasize our core values of diversity and inclusivity, and the importance of civility and respect, to students.

As you have probably seen in the news, the Illinois Labor Relations Board (ILRB) ruled yesterday that negotiations between the Governor's office and AFSCME, the union representing state employees, are at impasse. This means that the administration could begin imposing its last offer, which includes a 100 percent increase in employee health insurance costs. As you know, this contract sets the terms for what employees at state universities pay for our health insurance costs. From our understanding of the process, the ILRB will next issue a written report that will make the ruling official. At that point, the administration can begin implementing terms of the contract. It has been reported in the media however that AFSCME plans to appeal this decision in court, potentially delaying implementation. Of course as an alternative, both sides could return to the negotiating table to seek a final negotiated agreement as many lawmakers have asked them to do. Please know that we are working diligently to gather as much information for each of you on this issue as possible. My office has been in contact with CMS and is trying to determine what the next steps will be. We are waiting on answers to several questions which we hope will come soon to provide us with a roadmap on how this decision will be implemented. I know this is an issue that concerns each and every one of us and I will share more information with you as it becomes available.

Randy Dunn

Faces of SIU



As we continue to navigate the uncharted territory created by the state's budget crisis, it is safe to say the support of our alumni and friends has never been more important. That also is true of the work of development folks on our campuses.

And, like her colleagues across the system, SIUC's Nanditha Balasubramanian brings great passion to her work for the SIU Foundation. A double-alumna of Eastern Illinois University, Nan joined the Foundation as assistant director of annual giving in 1996. She became director of annual giving in 2006. Her role includes developing, organizing and supervising a comprehensive annual fund program that includes direct mail, phone solicitation, and e-solicitations, among other methods, to generate support from alumni and friends.

"The best part of my job is interacting with students, colleagues, alumni and community members and being able to tell the 'SIU story,' which helps shine the light on our campus and our accomplishments," she said.

The Annual Giving program also serves as a training ground for future fundraisers.

"The fundraising profession is an area that is really growing, given the increased interest in recruiting and retaining professionals with advanced skill sets who can serve their organizations well," Nan said. "Students who worked with me and were my mentees are now professional fundraisers in higher education and the non-profit sector. To think that they all got their start at the SIU Foundation is truly heartwarming and encouraging."

She appreciates the creativity and the challenges of her job, as well as opportunities to “strategize and innovate” when it comes to creating fundraising materials.

“I appreciate colleagues and alumni who believe in me and value the collective impact of our efforts to enrich the student experience,” Nan added. “After all, student learning and a positive educational experience are what we are striving to offer to everyone who calls SIU home.”

Other Voices in HIED

New York Times: [How the University of Alabama Became a National Player](#)

Washington Post Op Ed: [There needs to be a better way to rate the quality of colleges](#)
