



## THE SYSTEM CONNECTION

Greetings:

Ok — if you hadn't figured it out already — I have to admit that I took a little advantage of the spring break period at both SIUC and SIUE a couple of weeks ago. Not that I took any days off or went anywhere exotic, but I did decide to take a break from the regular publication schedule for *The System Connection* since I figured very few regular readers would worry about getting to it anyway!

But now we're all back in the groove ... pushing to the end of the SP15 semester ... and another column deadline looms for yours truly.

As I have indicated previously, for the column immediately following a regular Board of Trustees meeting (which this one is), I will generally use the space here to hit some highlights of what transpired from the Board's convening. A few bullets toward that end are provided below.

But first, I wanted to also offer some additional background and updates regarding what is becoming a pretty dramatic spring legislative session in Springfield. The state budget, obviously, is our top priority and I made a detailed presentation earlier this month (which is what I did on *my* spring break!) to both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees about the value of the SIU System to students, our communities and region, and the state. John Charles, executive director for governmental and public affairs, is doing yeoman's service in Springfield as he closely tracks about 600 bills ... among the 6,000 dropped into the General Assembly's hopper.

One of those bills that I know is keenly important to hundreds of our employees across the system is HB 403: Elimination of Tuition Waivers for Children of University Employees. I think it is fair to say that among the state universities, SIU and U of I took the lead in coming out in opposition to this bill and have been joined by such organizations as the State Universities Annuitants Association, the Illinois Nurses Association, and a variety of labor unions: AFL-CIO, IEA, IFT, SEIU, and AFSCME. We appreciate the combined efforts of everyone to maintain a long-standing benefit for our employees and their families. Suffice it to say that a close monitoring of this bill will continue to occur.

And yesterday, I was joined by scores of SIU students from all our campuses for the 2015 Lobby Day in the State Capitol. What was so impressive to me as we talked with legislators and others of influence about the devastating impact of the proposed FY16 budget cuts was the passion and knowledge our students brought to the conversations. They can tell our story better than anyone, and they recognize — as we all do — that SIU is part of a larger **solution** to the budget mess we're in. Illinois' public universities aren't just cost centers; we are an **investment** in the future of our state!

Everyone understands that Illinois is indeed in the throes of a fiscal crisis. But we also know that the draconian cuts as proposed will severely undermine student access to higher education, critical research efforts, and the economic impact of our universities for the areas we serve.

As I have said many times thus far this spring, we are in the midst of a much larger process and you can expect to see continuing evidence in the coming weeks of the types of cuts that are on the docket for all of SIU's operations in every location if we can't mitigate the drastic reductions proposed in the governor's budget — with the entire hit taken in one year, no less. We will need to show our hand at some point ... and that time is unfortunately coming I'm afraid. As one legislator said point-blank to me (well, I'm paraphrasing here) during my appropriations testimony: Tell me what you can cut. Why have you not done any reviews (regarding a question about the specific cuts to be made)? Maybe the 31.5 percent cut could be realistic... And this line of questioning came from a solid and respected legislator *whose district includes a state university*. These are the times we are in.

All of the above does not mean, however, that we can ignore the legitimate and ongoing needs on each of our campuses. Those needs continue and must be met. So let me share some examples of actions taken at last week's SIU Board of Trustees meeting:

- The Board approved a lease for 58,000 square feet of newly renovated office space in Springfield's medical district. This will allow the School of Medicine to consolidate various offices (such as information technology, patient billing services, and community health care support) in one location as there is no room to do that now on the medical school campus. Bringing these 300 people together will improve efficiency and the services they provide to the medical school and Springfield's two main hospitals. In a related matter, the Board approved the purchase of furniture for the newly leased space, using non-appropriated funds and funds from patient revenue sources.
- Trustees also approved much-needed renovations to the student lab at the School of Dental Medicine in Alton, as well as improvements to SIU Edwardsville's Student Fitness Center and Vadalabene Center. These are the types of projects that benefit current students and show prospective students and their families the priority we place on meeting our students' needs.
- One other example ... this one on the SIUC campus. The Trustees approved the second phase of renovations to the McLafferty Annex. The 10-year-old facility originally was built as storage space during the renovation and expansion of Morris Library, but we are in the process of converting it into a space that will significantly enhance the interdisciplinarity of the research enterprise.
- A couple of other notes from last week's meeting: Trustees agreed to reimburse and "make whole" roughly 3,500 eligible current and former SIU Carbondale employees for unpaid closure or furlough days that were taken during Fiscal Year 2011. The total cost will be a little over \$4 million, but the Board felt quite strongly about doing the right thing for everyone affected during those difficult days. Also, BOT members made Lucas Crater permanent general counsel for the SIU System. Luke had been interim general counsel since 2013, and he and our entire team are a skilled group who provide a broad range of legal services to all of our operations. In addition to the executive secretary and treasurer, the general counsel is one of three Board-appointed officers.

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One more item in closing — with an apology for making an already-long column even longer!

You may recall I ran a *Connection* column a few weeks ago that addressed SIU's recently adopted Open Access Policy in response to Illinois Public Act 098-0295. The SIU OA policy requests faculty to deposit copies of all accepted, peer-reviewed articles into the campus institutional repository (OpenSIUC at SIUC and SPARK at SIUE) prior to any contractual arrangement with a publisher.

As often happens in such cases, I may have confused rather than clarified ... so let me add this:

The SIU policy does NOT direct faculty where to publish, only to consider open access journals. The SIU policy does not relate to or address any aspect of promotion and tenure.

The majority of publishers of scholarly journals allow posting of some version of the author's article in a repository, which increases visibility of the researcher's work and provides open access to the results of scholarly productivity. Faculty should submit a waiver only when the publisher prohibits posting of any version in an institutional repository. The OA policy simply provides an organized way to track journal article publishing on SIU campuses and to allow reporting by a department or individual for various purposes.

The text of the SIU policy and information on how to comply, frequently asked questions, and the waiver form are available at <http://www.lib.siu.edu/siuc-oa-policy> for SIUC, with SIUE information coming soon. Informational sessions for faculty will be scheduled soon at both SIUC and SIUE.

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