

University Senates Conference Statutes and Governance Committee  
Report of Activities, 2013-14  
Joyce Tolliver, Chair

The Statutes and Governance Committee was occupied primarily with three main issues during the 2013-14 year: Revision of ST-72, Proposed amendments to Article X, Section 2 of the *Statutes* on Academic Freedom); Revision of ST-79, Proposed amendment to Article XIII, Section 8 of the *Statutes* (Amendments); and Board of Trustees' Review of Governing Documents.

1. Revision of ST-72, Proposed amendments to Article X, Section 2 of the *Statutes* on Academic Freedom):

This project began late in the 2012-13 academic year and continued actively through the summer of 2013 and into the 2013-14 academic year. In response to a request from the President's Office, members of the Statutes and Governance Committee met on several occasions with the President's staff members Peg O'Donoghue and Katherine Galvin to discuss their concerns about potential ambiguities in the wording of the revision to *Statutes* X.2 that previously had been approved by the three senates. In consultation with the chairs of the senate committees on Academic Freedom and Tenure, the group proposed a revision to the amendment that ultimately met with the approval of the President. The revised language was transmitted to the Senate chairs in March 2014. We anticipate receiving the advice of the three Senates during the fall 2014 semester.

2. Revision of ST-79, Proposed amendment to Article XIII, Section 8 of the *Statutes* (Amendments)

During the 2012-13 academic year, the Committee proposed an amendment to *Statutes* XIII.8 that would allow for the initiation of a proposed *Statutes* amendment by the University Senates Conference. Two of the campus Senates expressed concerns about potential misinterpretations of the wording. The document was revised by the Conference and returned to the Senates for further discussion. All of the campus Senates have now approved the revised amendment. We anticipate that the President will forward the document to the Board for approval early in the fall 2014 semester.

3. Board of Trustees' Review of Governing Documents: In fall 2012, the chair of the Board of Trustees Committee on Governance, Personnel and Ethics announced that the Board would be undertaking a major examination of its governing documents (*Statutes, General Rules, and Bylaws*) in order to bring the documents into alignment with current and anticipated practices. A very small drafting committee was appointed which included the Chair of USC, Nicholas Burbules, as the sole faculty representative. At that time, the USC Statutes Committee suggested to the drafting committee that, once all proposed amendments were transmitted to the Conference, it might expedite the Senate consultation process by sorting out the proposed

amendments into those that were purely editorial, those that proposed straightforward updating of language to reflect current practice, and those that could be construed to involve changes of policy. The drafting committee agreed with this arrangement.

This small drafting committee worked actively throughout the fall 2012 semester. Early in the spring 2013 semester, the committee membership was expanded to include the Chair of the UIS Senate, Lynn Fisher; and one faculty member each from UIC and from Urbana (Benet Deberry-Spence and Prasanta Kalita, respectively), as well as representatives from several University administrative offices. However, the activities of the drafting committee were then suspended until January 2014, when the committee began meeting again. At this time, Joyce Tolliver replaced Nicholas Burbules on the committee.

The 2014 drafting committee proposed several additional revisions to those of the 2012 committee. Also, several passages of the *Statutes* and *General Rules* were marked for further discussion. Twelve of these were assigned to the Conference for responses; the Statutes Committee drafted these responses and presented them to the full Conference late in the spring 2014 semester.

When the Conference receives the final version of all proposed amendments from the President's Office, the Statutes Committee will categorize them, as agreed in fall 2012, and will transmit them to the Senates for their advice. The Committee may use a different categorization system, however, based on topics or themes rather than a subjectively-determined level of importance. The Office of the Board of Trustees has indicated its intention to transmit the final proposed amendments to the Conference, through the President, by October 15.

In addition to these three major projects, the Statutes and Governance Committee also completed the following:

4. Review of our governing documents and practices for compliance with the Open Meetings Act

5. Proposed revisions to the "USC Guidelines on Transparency, Confidentiality, and the Conduct of Business." These were approved by the Conference.

6. Proposed revisions to the "USC Organization and Functions" document. We expect these revisions to be discussed by the full Conference early in the 2014-15 year.