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State News

University of Illinois

The decision by University of Illinois Board of Trustees to extend domestic partner benefits to gay and lesbian faculty and staff sparked a sharp reaction from state legislators. State Rep. Bill Mitchell, R-Forsyth, introduced HB 3832 in September to return the University of Illinois trustees to elected rather than appointed positions. Currently, all trustees in Illinois are appointed by the governor, with approval by the state Senate.

Other legislators want to give alumni associations (which are generally regarded as having a conservative influence) much more power in appointing trustees.

On Oct. 29, 2003, state Rep. Chapin Rose, R-Mahomet, introduced HB 3874 (which would apply to all public universities), requiring trustees appointed by the governor to be chosen from a list of three individuals nominated by the school's alumni association.

State Sen. Rick Winkel, R-Champaign, announced a bill to increase the number of U of I trustees from nine to 15, and change how they are selected. The Senate president and House speaker would appoint two members each, and the Senate minority leader and House minority leader would appoint one member each, while the governor would appoint three members and the alumni association six members to the board.

U of I at Urbana-Champaign

To mark the 50th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the Brown v. Board of Education Jubilee Commemoration (www.oc.uiuc.edu/brown) has a year of event, including an April 1-3 Law and Education Conference.

Illinois State University

Illinois State University has approved a policy requiring students beginning in fall 2005 to own a computer, but officials report that the rule will not be enforced and no students will be turned away for lacking a computer. The policy will include the cost of a computer in financial aid calculations.

Eastern Illinois University

Eastern Illinois University faculty and students objected to the process used by the Board of Trustees when it voted in October 2003 to extend interim president Lou Hencken's contract by two years. The EIU Student Senate passed a resolution asking the Board of Trustees to create an advisory committee "composed of representatives from the various constituencies of the campus community to participate in the process of selecting the president." The EIU Faculty Senate passed this resolution:

"Whereas, the Faculty Senate feels that the recent Board of Trustees decision to suspend the national search for the University president has strained the working relationship between the EIU campus community and its Board of Trustees;

"Whereas, the Faculty Senate wishes to establish improved working relationships for the best interest of EIU;

"Therefore, be it Resolved: The Faculty Senate recommends that the Board of Trustees, in consultation with the Faculty Senate, work to accomplish the following goals: to specify appropriate academic credentials for senior administrative positions, to increase the number and role of faculty members on search committees for academic deans, vice-presidents, and presidents, to consult and communicate with campus constituencies in a timely fashion; and the assure that administrative searches remain open and competitive."

University of Illinois

Because the new state "truth-in-tuition" law requires a fixed level of tuition for four years (rather than requiring public colleges to announce in advance what tuition increases will be), Illinois colleges will make massive tuition increases in Fall 2004. The University of Illinois became the first institution to set new tuition rates for next fall, increasing tuition by 8% for continuing students and 16% for incoming students. Because the "truth-in-tuition" law only applies to tuition, and not student fees or room and board expenses, students will not be able to plan their total college costs.

Freedom of the College Press and Governors State University

The October 31, 2000 issue of the Innovator, the student newspaper of Governors State University in suburban Chicago, was certainly controversial, with a front-page story about the dismissal of the Innovator's faculty adviser. It was so controversial, in fact, that it was the last one ever printed. President Stuart Fagan wrote in a campuswide memo, "I will not sit idly by, without comment, and allow the reputation of the university to be sullied by newspaper reporting that is inaccurate, insulting, and that might be driven, in part, by self-interest." The Administration did not sit idly by. Patricia Carter, dean of student affairs, contacted the printer to order that no further issues be printed until prior review had been made by a top administrator.

The Illinois College Press Association investigated the case and determined, "administrators have acted inappropriately, and probably illegally, with blatant disregard for students' First Amendment rights." Currently the case, *Hosty v. Carter*, is being reviewed by the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals, as the state of Illinois argues that colleges are no different from high schools and student newspapers should be subject to a similar censorship by administrators. The 7th Circuit will hear oral re-argument on Jan. 8, 2004. In this article, Margaret Hosty, the former managing editor and a plaintiff, reflects on the legal challenges involved in the case.

— *John K. Wilson*