



Faculty Advisory Council Illinois Board of Higher Education

To: Members of the Illinois Board of Higher Education

Fr: Members of the Faculty Advisory Council

Re: Welcome/Welcome Back!

As chair of your Faculty Advisory Council, I extend our heartfelt “Welcome!” to all new members of the Board, and “Welcome back!” to those returning to continue your terms. A little background about our council: The Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) was formed by the Board of Higher Education over 50 years ago to serve as their experts on, and advocates for, the faculty’s central role in the postsecondary system. The 36 members of the Council hail from various disciplines and all institution types—public, private, and proprietary, two- and four-year. We meet monthly during the academic year to share and inform, as well as determine what to research and do next to insure the vibrancy of Illinois’ higher education system. In all we do, we keep the over 60,000 faculty members we represent, as well as their students, uppermost in mind.

We are especially pleased to see the breadth, depth, and relevance of your new members’ backgrounds. Many of you have dedicated years to forming and building P-20 pathways, at one end or the other, from what we can tell. Others of you are actively engaged in educating diverse communities, meeting the changing needs of adults as well as children. Still others are focused on better understanding and/or finding ways to finance the education enterprise for all, cognizant that as Jose Ortega y Gasset argued in his *Mission of the University*, a society without robust postsecondary education opportunities can never transform its members to recognize their ideal selves and, in turn, create a truly cultural community.

We join efforts at an unprecedented time in our state’s higher education history. We suffer an unusual yet very real public relations problem: Increasing numbers of students leave Illinois to earn their degrees. They do not believe in our system’s worth. We must restore families’ faith in our institutions. We’ve many jewels in our postsecondary crown. We faculty are uniquely positioned to show

them to you. We need your help, though, in making them shine once more. Let's work together to show Illinois our true value.

Like other states around our nation and many countries worldwide, Illinois struggles to improve postsecondary access and affordability. We who work most closely with students, and partner with employers near and far, know much about how to prepare the 21st Century workforce. Let's work together to strategically position the resources we presently have, as well as to secure those we still require, to insure the learning needs of every Illinois resident and employer are met where they live and headquarter.

During the last four years, we faculty winced as we watched the three 'sister' boards and their agencies—IBHE, ICCB, and ISBE—grow ever more apart. Now that the IBHE contains more members familiar with those other agencies and boards, we urge you to capitalize on those relationships to reimagine and rebuild our P-20 system. The IBHE agency staff are nationally recognized experts in many, myriad aspects of developing effective P-20 partnerships. Our council has quite a few member experts as well. Let's work together to align our work with that of the other agencies and boards in meaningful, permanent ways.

As we move forward, let's not dwell on the past four years, or lament what should or could have been. Instead, let's remember another reflection of Ortega y Gasset:

Life is a series of collisions with the future; it is not the sum of what we have been, but what we yearn to be.

We, the Faculty Advisory Council, look forward to yearning—and working—with you. I will be contacting Chairman Atkinson to set up a day and time to meet so we can brainstorm further how to get started. Again, welcome—and happy new year!

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marie Ann Donovan". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Marie Ann Donovan, Ed.D.
Chair