Why Is Sheila Simon Bashing Illinois Community Colleges?

By Leo Welch

During the past year, Illinois Lt. Governor Sheila Simon toured all 48 public community colleges, apparently on a fact-finding tour, which appeared to be a meet-and-greet effort on behalf of the Governor. Most community college leaders were ecstatic that they were getting this much attention by the Lt. Governor.

In addition, she was the invited keynote speaker at the Illinois Community College Faculty Association Teaching-Learning Excellence Conference in October of 2011. Her speech to the faculty was warmly received by the attendees since her presentation was full of praise for community colleges.

The real basis for her tour became apparent when she addressed the City Club of Chicago on January 19, 2012. The City Club is a business-oriented organization that deals with civic issues in Chicago as well as the State of Illinois. The invited guests for Simon’s speech included Alexi Giannoulis, chair of the Illinois Community College Board; Geoffrey Okerut, CEO of the Illinois Community College Board; Carrie Hightman, chair of the Illinois Board of Higher Education; George Reid, executive director of the Illinois Board of Higher Education; Gery Chico, chair of the Illinois State Board of Education; and Miguel del Valle, head of P-20, the preschool through graduate school council.

Major media representatives were also present and quickly reported Simon’s comments about community colleges being “revolving door” institutions with low graduation rates. Her unfavorable comments about community colleges became headlines in newspapers around the state. The perception of her being a friend of community colleges quickly changed. The old cliche seems appropriate: who needs enemies when you have friends like this?

Simon’s full report, Illinois Community Colleges: Focus on the Finish, was issued to Governor Quinn and members of the General Assembly in January 2012 (ilgov.il.gov). The overall goal of her tour was to get approval for a state budget that would provide greater support for community colleges.

Bashing Illinois Community Colleges continued on page 8

Illinois AAUP Annual Meeting

Saturday, April 28, 2012
Concordia University, 7400 Augusta St., River Forest, IL
Christopher Center room 341
Free to all AAUP members and guests

Complimentary parking is available in the parking garage on the northeast side of the campus

Annual Meeting Schedule:

11am: Leo Welch, Illinois AAUP Legislative Liaison: Legislative initiatives impacting higher education in Illinois and nationally.

Noon: Lunch


3pm: Illinois AAUP membership and elections.

President’s Message

Michael Harkins
President, Illinois AAUP

In October 2011, the Illinois Conference of the AAUP held its fall meeting at Columbia College, Chicago, Illinois. Our program stressed the role of shared governance in higher education and the current role of adjunct faculty in Illinois. Ken Andersen and Diana Vallera, Illinois Conference Board members, made major presentations. The local Columbia College AAUP Chapter was well represented. Both full and part-time faculty participated. The presentations were relevant and meaningful given the increasing reliance of adjuncts throughout higher education. The question and answer session following the presentations was lively, pointed and open. The current issue of Academe will continue that discussion and debate. I would like to thank Columbia College and the Chapter for inviting the State Conference to the College for this important meeting.

Since the fall meeting, your offices and Board members have continued to serve and assist individual faculty members and our Chapters. On-site visits, Chapter presentations, email updates, our web page, chapter chair meetings and collaboration with National, the Illinois Conference has been a strong voice in the issues and challenges confronting our faculties of higher education in Illinois.

Through the efforts of our membership outreach committee, new Chapters and members are being added to the Conference on a regular basis. Congratulations to the faculty at Elmhurst College for starting a new Chapter. The State Conference stands ready to help you move forward with local Chapter activities and events.

Our Committee A members have continued to step forward to provide leadership in assisting faculty members in the protection of tenure, academic freedom and faculty rights. As we started the new year, the Conference received two grants from National to help in Chapter development and membership outreach. As our Chapter and state membership continues to grow, we will seek additional funding to increase assistance to our local Chapters. To help us, please continue to encourage your colleagues who are not members to join and to start Chapters.

As we continue to face challenges such as proposed reductions, layoffs, program elimination and restructuring, a strong AAUP Chapter can have a voice in those deliberations. Faculty participation and engagement is primary. Since January I have served as an observer at faculty hearings and visited with Chapter Chairs. Also, I have attended a number of Chapter meetings and explained our role in higher education in Illinois. The involvement of our members at all levels continues to increase. We all must be vigilant and active. Our current and future students need us to protect their education now.

Last month we completed our nomination process for delegates to the National and Association State Conference Annual meetings this June in Washington, D.C. Ken Andersen of the University of Illinois and Joerg Tiede of Illinois Wesleyan University, will represent our Conference. John Wilson of Illinois State University will serve as alternate. In closing I would like to invite you to attend our Spring Conference on April 28, 2012 at Concordia University in River Forest, Illinois and the AAUP Summer Institute July 26-29, 2012 at Roosevelt University, Chicago, Illinois. The details can be found in the current issue of Academe and on the National AAUP website (aaup.org).

For current state and local news and updates, please check the Illinois Conference website (ilaaup.org) or contact any of your State Conference Board members. In the interim, join us as we move forward in the Campaign for the Future of Higher Education. The future of our Republic demands it.
Using the Power of Narrative

KEN ANDERSEN

Killing Lincoln Reviewed by Ken Andersen

Killing Lincoln: The Shocking Assassination that Changed America Forever by Bill O'Reilly and Martin Dugard has become a best-seller, and already announced is a production of the memoir by Salute Dali; concerts by artists like Salvatore Dali; concerts by artists like Salvatore Dali; concerts by artists like Salvatore Dali; concerts by artists like Salvatore Dali; concerts by artists like Salvatore Dali; concerts by artists like Salvatore Dali; concerts by artists like Salvatore Dali; concerts by artists like Salvatore Dali; concerts by artists like Salvatore Dali; concerts by artists like Salvatore Dali; concerts by artists like Salvatore Dali; concerts by artists like Salvatore Dali; concerts by artists like Salvatore Dali; concerts by artists like Salvatore Dali; concerts by artists like Salvatore Dali; concerts by artists like Salvatore Dali; concerts by artists like Salvatore Dali; concerts by artists like Salvatore Dali; concerts by artists like Salvatore Dali; concerts by artists like Salvatore Dali; 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A Misguided View of Religious Liberty

This essay by Peter N. Kirstein (professor of history at St. Xavier University, Vice President of the Illinois AAUP and chair of the Illinois AAUP Committee A) originally appeared in the English xxx at sites.kirstein

By Peter N. Kirstein

John Garvey, president of censured Catholic University of America (CUA), a pontifical university that has a dismal record of aggressively promoting conformity to religious theological dogma over academic freedom, is protecting the government’s alleged encroachment on Catholic and religious institutions across the spectrum of American higher education. Beware of university presidents who believe truth is not subject to continuous skepticism and revisionism!

This ironic state-within-a-state approach that asserts the federal government is undermining the separation of church and state takes aim at adjuncts who are paid $2300 a course at St. Xavier University. Malcolm X and other luminaries of the Nation of Islam also advocated for a time a black state within the US. At least they were open to interfaith dialogue and cooperation. But today there is no room for religious, racial, or cultural pluralism in the public square, let alone on a private institution of higher education.

It is no accident that there is no clearer example of this than at Catholic University of America. The president of CUA, John Garvey, has no standing, in my opinion, within the academic community to be lecturing on institutions how to be more hospitable to religious belief. He is more likely to be lecturing in protecting religious-educational sovereignty. He should be concerned about the lack of academic freedom on his own campus and justice for the downtrodden, as opposed to carving out an autonomous-religious state exempt from federal law.

For 22 years the administration of Catholic University of America has been censured by the American Association of University Professors. The task of justice is directed at out-of-control administrators who use the power of their office to suppress, punish, and cajole professors. John Garvey then moves a tenured, liberal theologian, Reverend Charles E. Novarum of 1891. As the president of a censured, pontifical university, he has no standing to say anything to say about his censured university’s persecutions. Garvey then develops a laundry list of alleged provocations, and makes sure they are reported in the media. President Garvey has no standing, in my opinion, within the academic community to be lecturing on institutions how to be more hospitable to religious belief.

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Adjoints have the right to form a union, President Garvey. They have the same rights as full time faculty at St. Xavier have. I am sure the president is unaware that there is a faculty union at St. Xavier, and he probably has never been to the campus or spoken to one of its adjuncts. The union was formed in 1979 and the adjuncts, the majority of faculty at St. Xavier, merely demand the American right to organize for collective bargaining.

St. Xavier is non-creedal, its board is predominantly Catholic and its staff, but its administration. The AAUP censuring of its staff, but its administration. The AAUP censuring of

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Loud and Clear
By Mike Theune

On September 13, 2011, the Office of Student Activities at Illinois Wesleyan University (IWU) organized a poetry reading as part of Parents’ Week. This was the first in a series of poetry readings the student group at IWU that promotes the art of performance poetry, was not allowed to perform. The student group, an affiliate of The Writers, 2007), an associate professor of English, and host of the blog threestructureandfoursurprise.wordpress.com, wrote this essay originally appeared in the IWU AAUP newsletter, rwu.edu/iwu-aaup. 

Bryn Saunders is a senior English-Writing major at IWU.

By James Simonethe Illinois Wesleyan University AAUP recently convened on September 29, 2011, to discuss Matthew Finkin and Robert Post’s For the Common Good: Principles of Academic Freedom (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). The session was framed by the censoring, earlier in September, of a student poet in Hansen Student Center. A student had his microphone turned off on the grounds that the poem he was reciting could have been offensive to those parents and children attending the poetry reading as part of Parents’ Weekend. Let me discuss the book some before I return to this case.

Finkin and Post clearly explicate the basic principles of academic freedom as developed and currently practiced in the United States. The book is a timely re- minder that the principles are rooted in the constitutional and legal framework that plays a watchdog organization investigating alleged infringements of academic freedom. Professors need the freedom to pursue knowledge fearlessly because new truths about how the universe works or how society impacts individuals often off- end existing sensibilities and taboos.

The IWU faculty in the United States enjoy great autonomy in the selection and promotion of their research topics. Many professors work in solitude, a tenure track, which shields them from being fired simply because of the content of their research agenda. Those new to the profession often ask: If professors are empleadooned by their employers “appointed to discharge the default setting at a place like IWU should allow students to speak their minds, and manner restrictions. The default setting does not impair freedom of expression or artistic expression can be limited by “reasonable content-neutral regulation of speech” (I).

The devil is in the details. I would argue that university campuses, and especially state universities, have yet adopted a clear, obvious default setting in terms of time, place, and manner restrictions. The default setting should allow students to speak their minds, and the devilish code of silence is not just a vague expression that is marked and delineated. Were this approach accepted, the next step should be to communicate the university default setting to all IWU staff.

James Simonethe Illinois Wesleyan University AAUP. This essay originally appeared in the IWU AAUP Chapter Newsletter.
In the midst of this corporatized academy, and no unfair labor practices were filed.

If there was no union. In fact, there was assistants and attorneys, the union leader faculty. These realities shape the current part-time faculty are treated like freelanc corporatization. Despite being unionized, freedom for part-time fac shape curriculum within the are neither making a decision concerning college policies, practices and vision. Be cause there is no genuine dialogue or commit to labor relationship, the union is left part-time faculty have had by a response by Columbia College Pro- fession 's Part-Time Faculty Union.

It is important to realize that CCC is not in a financial crisis. It has purchased new buildings and according to statements made by a response by Columbia College President Carter has a growing endowment and is in a strong and nimble financial condition. From its inception, part-time faculty have been a part of the fabric at CCC. About 10 years ago we noticed changes taking place within the College as corporatization started to take hold, and we saw this:

- significant expansion of administration on all levels, including assistants, with high-paid salaries;
- an increasingly top-down system of management;
- an administration that seems most concerned about creating curriculum that helps guarantee higher re- tention rates and cost-saving measures;
- standardization of class es so that faculty have less choice in the design of syllabus and selection of texts;
- increases in classroom enrollment caps; and
- an overall decline in the quality of instruction.

The corporatization of Columbia College has resulted in a rapid decline in morale among faculty. There is a growing disconnect from the courses they teach. Despite being unionized, part-time faculty have had few opportunities to influ- ence the policies and pro- cedures under which they work and do not have a voice on the committees that shape curriculum within the area where they teach. Academic freedom for part-time facul ty has always been limited but has narrowed further under corporatization. Despite being unionized, part-time faculty are treated like freelanc constituting a second class citizenry of faculty. This is a direct result of the current struggle of the part-time faculty union.

As the administration has become more corporatized, the battle for more human re- sources in the form of associate deans and assistants and attorneys, the union leader- ship did not. As a result, the administration was able to replace a number of faculty for 12 years as if there was no union. In fact, there was not one grievance on record in 12 years - not one complaint, and no unfair labor practices were filed. In the midst of this corporatized academy, the union had little member involvement. Because unionization is one of the only means for part-time faculty voices to be heard, the union has undergone significant changes in just the last year. It seems that the corporatization process has a capstone at Columbia College this is being called "prioritization." Prioritization at Columbia College of Chicago

“Prioritization,” or as it is called cur- rently, “Prioritization,” includes ranking all programs according to how they fulfill the mission of the college, as well as what resources they consume.

What we do know is that Prioritization was brought in by the college during the summer of 2011. The purpose and goals of which were created without faculty or student input. Soon after the fall semester began, the Faculty were invited to IMPLI- MENT a vision for CCC that they had no role in imagining or shaping.

In addition to prioritization the admin- istration has resisted bargaining. The part- time faculty union has been bargaining for over 18 months. We are committed to a fair contract one that includes due process, transparent and fair evaluations, job secu- rity, benefits and a dignified work environ- ment. In my experience as lead negotiator, the college spent many months stalling, intimidating, and allowing legal to run bargaining.

The College seeks to exclude any third party (an arbitrator, for example) from making a decision concerning the contract. This is telling of the institution’s opposi- tion to due process. The Administration wants management to be the sole decision maker in this regard, thereby excluding any un- needed intervention by the college policies, practices and vision. Be- cause there is no genuine dialogue or commit- ment to labor relationship, the union is left part-time faculty through Unfair La- bor Practice charges and grievances.

The Climate of Fear

This prioritization is tak- ing place within a larger con- text of fear where no one is safe anymore. We have seen too many faculty member fired, the provost left abruptly, and there is talk of eliminating and renaming programs.

President Carter has stat- ed publicly that he does not believe in tenure. Bullying by administrators is con- doned by inaction in the face of grievances. There is talk of cuts to classroom support, but the number of attorneys has tripled in one year, con- tributing to a growing ad- ministration.

The administration has been successful in squelch- ing dialogue as a matter of policy and overall climate. (As an example I used to meet with the P-fac to resolve complaints by members and it worked well, but now these convers- ations are either prohibited or monitored.)

This environment has dramatically impacted peo- ple’s lives. I would like to share a few examples:

1. A part-time faculty member who had been teaching at Columbia over 15 years, who was in good standing and had a good teaching record found herself placed in remediation – the reason given was a SINGLE poor student evaluation. When she sat to meet with the chair of her de- partment, she was told: “you have no re- course” and “you are fired, what don’t you understand.” This doesn’t bode well for one example of many that reveal serious problems with the evaluation of part-time faculty - a lack of due process.

2. Another example comes from those faculty in History, Humanities, and Social Sciences who are particularly vulnerable, because most make a full-time living by teaching part time. So cuts in classes as signed to senior part-time faculty reveal how damaging it is for part-time faculty to be treated as freelancers who can be dis- carded. Many part-time faculty have tied their loss of homes and are scrambling to secure teaching elsewhere. This situation reveals that all faculty have needed a fair system of job security as one advances in their number of credit hours taught at the College reflecting mutual investment.

3. A faculty member with more than 30 years of teaching at the College, facing radical changes in curriculum for adminis- trative reasons, has been repeatedly denied the opportunity to address the curriculum committee, to meet with the department chair, or to talk with the dean and numer- ous other administrators. Her experience reveals the need for part-time faculty to share in the overall faculty voice in cur- riculum decisions and other college deci- sions.

4. And finally, a Columbia College administrator equated a part-time faculty benefit with the opportunity to go a muse- um. I will quote a part-time faculty mem- ber’s response:

“To equate the opportunity to go the Museum of Contemporary Art with a union benefit offends me. I’m offended because I have cancer. I’m offended because in order to treat that cancer with health insurance cost me between $3,000 and $4,000 a month. With insurance it costs $54.

“Today, I spoke on the phone with my daughter. She joked that I should make the museum in a wheelchair. And then she added, ‘if you had insurance, and you could afford it.’ Health insurance is a rea- sonable issue, and (name of administrator removed) doesn’t address it in any of her communications, as if part-time teachers don’t exist.

“She doesn’t bring up the issue of sick leave at all, except to say unit members take advantage of it. They seize the op- portunity to get paid to take a day off. The mental strain of teaching isn’t considered or discussed. The need for rest is not dis- cussed. As a teacher she should do an hon- est day’s work, for an honest day’s pay. There’s nothing sophisticated about that. But to assume that teachers, especially part-time teachers, may not need a day away from teaching to attend a meeting for professional development, or that a mother or father won’t need the problem of caring for a sick child, in an emergency and to argue that teachers take advantage of the opportunity, begs the question, and undermines the basic integrity of teach- ers.”

This is the environment in which we find ourselves.

The Response of Faculty

In this environment I continue to hear faculty and administrators say we have “no choice” and otherwise reflect a defeatist mentality. This environment, faculty, are facing the problem of caring for a sick child, in an emergency and to argue that teachers take advantage of the opportunity, begs the question, and undermines the basic integrity of teach- ers.”

This is the environment in which we find ourselves.
COPROPATIZATION AT COLUMBIA COLLEGE continued from page 5

standing at the end of the day?"

On the topic of collegiality, Anne Casse-
baum in Academe argues that “Collegiality suffers when inequalities separate us. At my institution, for example, if you were people you knew. And now? There is stigma and exclusion to overcome. One adjunc-
t faculty member where I worked is stigma and exclusion to overcome. One

The Role of the AAUP

The AAUP is needed today. The content
of faculty proficiency must be protected. The current climate of corporatized academia demands that dialogue within academic in-
stitutions about academic institutions, poli-
cies, “re prioritization” and “prioritization” must be stopped. There is a curtailing of dialogue today at CCC through policies that have imposed silence, the creation of a new position to handle grievances has blocked P-fac from interacting with someone with the power to address problems raised.

The AAUP is a cornerstone of dialogue at CCC through the tightening of controls over college space and resources. There is a reason that the issues on CCC important issues are NOT being asked (for example, why are 2008 enrollments, a year with unprecedented enrollment, the same as 2007? Why are we redundant? Why are we doing the same thing year after year when it’s clear that we need to change?) There is little chance publicly expressed to prioritization and the admin-
istration’s approach to bargaining. The exploitation of the part-time fac-
culty and the corporatization of academia is not new, nor is it unique to Columbia Col-
lege. It is fairly transparent that the collective bargaining as a tool for a much larger national effort to shape minds along a corporate model for generations to come. We need to stop perceiving of and treat-
ning part-time faculty via the old model of freelancers and start to view each other as colleagues.

We are unique who access to all the rights and privi-
leges of the professorato though we are subjected to a structure reflect-
ing part-time, portion of full-
time, and full-time status. We need to support for the right for all faculty to earn a living, have health

care benefits, and opportunity for advance-
ment. Those of us fortunate enough to have
health insurance need to be willing to have
a reduction in pay if it’s necessary so
that everyone can have adequate health care. We need to stand together as faculty to protect our future. We need to define “collegiality” through a framework of intelligent dialogue guided by principles that we share. We share the same ideas and interests and are creative enough to struct-
ure systems of access that reflect a part-time, full-time, or portion of full-time status.
Dialogue and exchange is a cornerstone of democracy and currently
have historically been places where vigor-
ous dialogue and debate were encouraged. Without policies and procedures to protect
dialogue, faculty (and most of the rest of the college community) are rendered
follows to administrative will.

Columbia and CCC have not had many im-
portant things that have happened on this cam-
pus just this last year. The full-time faculty has been fighting the Board of Trustees to part-time faculty inclusion within it. The part-time faculty union has been tak-
ing every measure to stand up to this ad-
ministrative will. The result is that faculty are
to the program’ was based upon his tem-
porary status—reasoning that usually goes unchallenged. When faculty members in contingent appointments are excluded from
collegial conversations, as well as opportunities in teaching, scholarship, and service, the voices, energies, and insights they might have added.

Today at Columbia College some fac-
ulty are allowing themselves to be used as “straw persons” to remove the focus from top administrators where decisions are ren-
dered. Similarly, faculty are parroting ad-
ministrative directives even while claiming that they personally disapprove of them today. Administrators and others, faculty generally support-
ing prioritization and allowing ourselves to be divided and taken advantage of in the process. Indeed the process of prioritiz-
ition itself is a setup of division. While the full-time faculty formed a Senate, the part-time faculty 
formation of a separate advisory group for prioritization be formed, the faculty conversation is dramatically cur-
tailed by the overall decision-making. This is a choice, and we make it every day.

Here is a letter (dated August 29, 2011) from an academic manager in the Depart-
ment of Humanities, History, and Social Sciences, who chose to say NO:

Dear Editor,

I wish to respond to some of the remarks made by David Diana. These comments express only my own personal opinion and not that of my institution.

Diana Valleria describes Columbia Col-
lege as a place where shared gov-
ernance and due process are in retreat. This is not true. During the past 25 years this college has achieved historic and ongoing im-
provements. Of the AAUP principles, those of shared governance, academic freedom, and due process. Ten years ago, and thanks to faculty efforts and improvements in all the fundamental AAUP principles, is not that of my institution.

Response by Columbia College Professor Pangratios Papacosta

The AAUP is needed today. The content
of faculty proficiency must be protected. The current climate of corporatized academia demands that dialogue within academic in-
stitutions about academic institutions, poli-
cies, “re prioritization” and “prioritization” must be stopped. There is a curtailing of dialogue today at CCC through policies that have imposed
encourage practices that destroy faculty morale. Most in-
stitutions still regard faculty morale as a precious asset and any 
action that jeopardizes it is nothing short of commit-
ting institutional suicide.

The ongoing strike is a result of recent college develop-
ments the quality of education that we offer to our students has 
declined. This is absolutely and categorically false. The 
quality of our offerings has risen steadily during the 
last few years. We have been meeting excellence stan-
dards. To serve them better we have created an Honors Program 
that has grown steadily during the last two years. 
Every year our students and faculty are winning some of 
the highest awards in arts and letters. During the 
industry week, recruiters from some of the top media com-
panies are on our campus to recruit our students. Thanks to 
the sacrifices made by all our part-time faculty, enroll-
ment has increased and the quality of the education we offer to our students has been 
dramatically improved. The offer referenced by Papacosta 
represents a regression. He has no knowledge of how the 
school's administration to the P-fac leadership is a reasonable step forward. 
It eradicates the artificial decisions impacting our members. And it 
also includes the promise of further negotiations after one year.

We have been fighting throughout that the new 
P-fac leadership has decided to abandon this approach 
and to use instead an adversarial and war-like rhetoric in 
their negotiation strategy. In my opinion, this has 
harmed our community. I am in full support of our part-
time colleagues and their ongoing efforts for improved 
benefits. What I have recognized is that all demands made currently by the new P-fac leadership 
can be met by our college now or in the future. In an ideal 
world, all teaching at Columbia and elsewhere should be 
done by full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty. But the 
reality in academia is very different. I know very well that our part-
time colleagues serve an important role in the life 
of the college and they deserve an adequate representation is really 
realistically possible. The following are highlights of the 
alternative offer made by our administration to the P-fac. These 
were discussed in a letter sent to all the faculty by Louise, 
Papacosta in December of 2011:

- Offering to re-open wage negotiations in one year.
- Offering to increase payments to union leaders to a total of $44,800 (an increase of 6.7%).
- Offering to increase payments for committee work by 50% to a range of $75 - $125 per meeting.
- Offering to increase course cancellation fees by 150% to $250 per semester.
- Offering to increase compensation for required train-
ting by 200% from $25 to $75 - $125.
- Offering to double the current budget for the Profes-
sional Development Fund to $50,000. This is in addition to 
the new contract. These negotiations are now 
bargaining in good faith in negotiations for a new contract. 
This is realized.

The offer referenced by Papacosta has never the 
highest paid – if not the highest paid – part-time 
colleagues, benefits that have improved their 
quality of the education we offer to our students has been 
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Tenure in Illinois Public Community Colleges
Michael J. Harkins

Many community college students take credit courses with no intent to finish a degree. Some enrol for one semester and take a general studies course for transfer to another institution. Students already enrolled in another institution may be taking a summer course at their local community college. Students who have full-time jobs may take one evening course a semester. There are many other students of this type. But Simon assumes that all enrolled students are pursuing an associate degree or certificate at their community college. This is misleading and creates a misunderstanding on how students utilize community colleges. It also distorts the statistics in Simon's report.

When a student initially enrolls in a community college, they are asked to choose from several options—one of which is the intent to complete a certificate or an associate degree. It is these full-time students, and these students only, that should be used in the metric to determine if the graduation goal is completed in three years or less. A more accurate measure of graduation rates would result.

Simon has used a chapter outline of her report that she titles “Four Steps to Focus on the Finish.” Each of her four steps has three recommendations. Some of these recommendations raise significant questions, especially from a faculty perspective.

**STEP 1: Start high school students on the right path**

Recommendation: School counselor students to complete four years of math to graduate

I agree with proposal, but recommend that it be expanded to include science and English. A number of sources indicate that 36% of Illinois public high school students entering community colleges as freshmen in 2006-2008 enroll in a remedial math course. Based on ACT scores, only 23% of 2011 Illinois high school graduates mat the college readiness benchmarks in math, science, and English.

Offer dual credit courses to juniors and seniors at all public high schools

I have serious doubts concerning the effectiveness and cost of the dual credit course system. Dual credit (not dual enrollment) means that a high school student is given both high school credit and college credit for the same course. These courses are not the same as Advanced Placement courses. In dual credit courses, the student pays no tuition for the course, but the State gives funding to the high school for that student and funds the community college for the credit hours generated by that high school student. This is a classic case of “double dipping.” The community college student’s transcript will not indicate that the credit was earned while the student was in high school.

There is little or no oversight to determine if dual-credit courses are college level in their rigor. Lewis and Clark Community College in Godfrey, Illinois, claims that 98% of their dual-credit course students in 16 area public high schools and 3 private high schools have earned a C or better in these dual-credit courses. The College Board that administers Advanced Placement courses, however, announced that in 2011 43.8% of public school students nationally failed their AP tests. These testing statistics raise serious doubts as to whether dual-credit courses are college level in their rigor.

There is little or no oversight to determine if dual credit courses are college level.

Promote collaboration between college and high school faculty

Since public community colleges, by law, are open admission institutions, I have no idea how collaboration would produce more community college graduates. The report does not make this clear.

**STEP 2: Anticipate the needs of more college students**

Contextualize and embed remedial skills courses in credit-bearing courses

Simon wants to reinvent remediation by placing as many students as possible in credit courses. This assumes that courses will be modified to accommodate students who are not college-ready in math, reading, or writing. Her recommendation flies in the face of the Community College Act that states: “Students allowed entry in a college transfer program must show reading and writing competence similar to that possessed by students admitted to state universities for a similar program.” Her recommendation also ignores the expectation of the Illinois Articulation Initiative that courses designated as transfer courses will be equivalent to those courses in a senior institution.

An alternative solution to the number of remedial students entering community colleges is to require high schools to adequately prepare their graduates to be college ready. Put the onus back where it belongs by letting in the K-12 system absorb the cost and frustration of graduating students who are not academically prepared.

**STEP 3: Create clear pathways to success**

Create a general education certificate that guarantees transfer students sophomore status

The Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) was supposed to solve the long-standing problem of course transfers. The transferer of courses from community colleges to four-year institutions remains an issue. Simon proposes that a binding agreement should be developed to ensure transfer. I suggest that any binding agreement should be based on state funding eligibility. Public community colleges and public universities all receive state funding. So do the independent (private) and for-profit institutions. The latter utilize the Monetary Awards Program (MAP) as well as capital funding. Place some teeth in a binding agreement on course transfers. Failure to accept agreed upon courses by receiving institutions should result in cutting or eliminating their funding.

**STEP 4: Report and reward progress and completion**

This step appears to be essentially the same as the Illinois Board of Higher Education’s performance-based funding metrics for community colleges. Simon’s report lists the following:

- Degree and certificate completion: Students completing a degree or certificate within 150% of the time (three years for a two-year degree).
- Degree and certificate completion of at risk students: At risk students can be defined in several ways, including those receiving a Pell grant or students who were enrolled in remedial education.
- Transfer to a two-year or four-year institution: Full-time and part-time students who make lateral transfers or transfer to a four-year institution prior to completing a degree or certificate.
- Remedial and adult education advancement: Remedial students who advance to remedial or college-level courses.

All of these recommendations are going to fall right on the heads of instructional faculty. If adopted, we can expect more grade inflation, reduction of class rigor, and the equivalent of social promotion. Her report falls clearly in the realm of a political agenda and not an educational one.

**Illinois AAUP**

Michael J. Harkins
President
Assoc. Prof. of History
Harper College
mjharkins@att.net

Peter N. Kirstein
Vice-President
Prof. of History
St. Xavier University
kirstein@sxu.edu

Lee Mathby
Secretary
Dean of Instruction
St. Augustine College
leem@staugustine.edu

Kenneth Andersen
Treasurer
Professor of Communication, Emeritus, University of I.I. Urbana-Champaign
keanders@illinois.edu

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collegefreedom@yahoo.com

www.ilaauop.org

The Nominating Committee is nominating Michael Harkins for President, Peter Kirstein for Vice-President, and For State Council: Todd Price, Lisa Higgins, Patrick Williams, Edward Carroll (Heartland Community College), and Lorett Caphezeit (NEIU). Nominations may also be made by petition signed by at least 15 members of the Conference, counting no more than 5 from any one chapter, and must be received by the President at least 5 days prior to the Annual Meeting.