

STATE GOVERNMENT

Legislators keep loophole in records law

SPRINGFIELD (AP) — Illinois legislators voted to keep a loophole in state public information laws, even though Gov. Pat Quinn wanted to close it.

The issue is whether performance evaluations for government employees can be released to the public under

the Illinois Freedom of Information Act.

Legislators voted earlier this year to make the evaluations secret. Quinn used his amendatory veto to change the legislation so that only evaluations for police officers would be off limits to taxpayers.

But the Senate voted 48-3 on Wednesday to reject Quinn's changes. The House did the same thing two weeks ago.

Critics of Quinn's changes say supervisors might not be honest in their evaluations if they know the public could end up reading them.

EDITORIALS

Veto override boosts secrecy

Supporters of open government in this corrupt state lose again as the state Senate votes to allow another exemption in the Freedom of Information Act.

After his recent election victory, Gov. Pat Quinn claimed a mandate to govern Illinois on his terms. If only he had a little clout to go along with it.

Members of the Illinois Senate completed their latest trampling of Quinn Wednesday, voting 48-3 to override his veto of their effort to create another new hole in the state's Freedom of Information Act. The Illinois House earlier had voted 77-36 to override the veto.

The legislation repeals part of the FOIA that took effect less than a year ago and included provisions for performance evaluation of public employees to be available for inspection. While that may appear to some people to be an onerous provision of law, it's important for members of the public to be able to see how their public officials and employees are evaluated in the performance of their duties.

For example, wouldn't Rantoul residents be curious to know about the job performance of the recent school superintendent who received a big chunk of taxpayers' money in exchange for her resignation? This issue is a potentially important way for citizens to understand how public employees supported by taxpayer dollars are performing.

But the fact of the matter is that public employees are represented by powerful unions that underwrite the campaigns of legislators, and they used their considerable clout to keep employee evaluations private.

First it was the teachers' union that pressured legislators to repeal a portion of the new law that made public school employee evaluations, including those of principals and superintendents, available. Quinn, obviously

angling for the endorsement of the teachers' union in the recent election, signed that bill.

After school employees got their pass, public employee union leaders pressed for legislation exempting the evaluations of all public employees from inspection. Quinn issued an amendatory veto of that bill to exempt the performance of state and local law enforcement personnel while leaving others open for inspection.

Illinois House Republicans Bill Black, Shane Cultra and Chapin Rose stood up for the concept of open government by supporting Quinn's amendatory veto. State Rep. Naomi Jakobsson, who pays lip service to the concept of transparency in government, voted to override.

Local members of the state Senate were unanimous in voting to override the veto. Democratic state Sen. Mike Frerichs and Republicans Sen. Dale Righter and Dan Rutherford opted for secrecy.

The votes to override are a slap in the face to people who believe in holding public employees, particularly those holding high-paying, powerful jobs, accountable.

These two successful assaults on open government in Illinois are only the beginning of the effort to turn Illinois' new FOIA law into the same toothless wonder that the state's original FOIA was.

The state's original FOIA was laughable. Public officials could and did violate it with impunity because there were — really — no penalties for violating it. The only way an individual or a news organization could force compliance was to file a costly lawsuit.

The new FOIA is a substantial improvement. That's why so many public officials and leaders of public employee unions hate it and continue to work to gut it. Each modification only increases the resolve of the enemies of the FOIA to continue to do the public's business in private.

ISS GUEST COLUMN

Board should allow students to speak up

The time is NOW for student and faculty representation on the Board of Trustees.

The Student Senate took a step in the right direction at its meeting on Nov. 17 by passing the "Statement for the Restructuring of the Board of Trustees" and endorsing it as the Official Voice of the Student Body. With this action, the Senate affirmed that we, the students, are tired of the state's overwhelming control over the composition of the Board of Trustees and the lack of student and faculty representation from the three sister campuses.

Currently, the Board is made up of nine voting members appointed by the Governor of Illinois, one student trustee with an official vote, two student trustees with advisory (non-binding) votes, and the Governor as an *ex officio* member.

The Student Senate's Statement for the Restructuring of the Board of Trustees calls on the Illinois General Assembly to amend the University of Illinois Trustees Act to grant all three student trustees a binding vote, as well as give three faculty members, one from each campus, votes on the Board as well.

We understand that the current level of state control might have been proper when the state was contributing a large percentage of the funding for

our institution (44 percent in 1980.) But today, when the state is contributing only 16.4 percent of the total budget, which constitutes less than the amount raised through student tuition, the balance of power needs to be seriously re-evaluated. Why should the state maintain complete control over the University when the students are contributing more than they are?

While the three student trustees are supposed to represent the three student bodies on the Board, only one of them has the ability to cast an official vote. To make matters worse, the Governor typically chooses the student vote after several BOT meetings have already passed, thus further diminishing the influence of the students. Against nine other voting members, the student voice is consistently drowned out. All three University campuses host very diverse student bodies, yet only one person is given the power to speak for these wildly different constituencies.

Similarly, the faculty currently have no voice on the Board of Trustees. A Nov. 16 Daily Illini editorial claimed that faculty views are adequately represented by the three campus Academic Senates. However, the Board of Trustees completely ignored the faculty senates' concerns and complaints (both the UIUC and UIC faculty sen-

ates rejected these proposals) over the new restructuring plan at their Nov. 18 meeting and unanimously voted to pass the controversial plan. It is clear that the faculty do not have an adequate voice in Board decisions. The voices of the faculty should not go unheard and unheeded by the Board of Trustees.

Of course, the members of the Board of Trustees are valuable public servants and stewards of the University. That goes without saying. Rather, it is the structure of the Board that is the problem. In order to solve the pressing problems the University faces, it is vital that the voices of the students and the faculty are heard. The Student Senate will continue to advocate in favor of student and faculty representation on the Board of Trustees, and we invite all students who want a strong voice in the decisions that effect their university to join us in our efforts. With your help, we can hand the keys of our university over to two of its most important stakeholders — the students and the faculty.

JIM MASKERI,

student senator, LAS
chairman, ISS Student Affairs

PETER HUGHES,

student senator, Engineering
chairman, ISS University Budget

BROCK GEBHARDT,

student senator, DGS

GUEST COLUMN

UI energy: Not a matter of petty politics

This fall, the University of Illinois took a pioneering step by issuing a request for proposing a 1.5 megawatt wind turbine for the south farms. This was the outcome of seven years of hard work by students and made possible by a significant investment from student fees. Thus, it was with great disappointment that we witnessed Urbana City Council members express baseless reservations about the project at the Council meeting on Nov. 15. On behalf of Students for Environmental Concerns, the oldest environmental activist group on campus, and the Student Sustainability Committee, investors in the project, we would like to clarify some misconceptions about this investment in renewable energy.

The wind turbine project is the outcome of student lobbying and investment. The Student Sustainability Committee awarded a \$500,000 grant from student fees to the project. Students voted in 2003 to create the Cleaner Energy Technologies Fee and the Sustainable Campus fee to fund projects of this nature and voted again in 2010, in the midst of a nation-

wide recession, to raise the fee from \$5 to \$14 per semester to advance these investments in the future. This April, the Student Senate passed a resolution in support of this project because of its many benefits to the campus. The presence of student funding was a major factor in the decision by the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation to award the University a \$2 million grant for this project – a grant which will be lost if there are any more delays.

The turbine will sit on a site near the intersection of Philo Road and Old Church Road, outside of Urbana city limits. The site was chosen (over two other sites adjacent to Windsor Avenue) because of its distance from residential and other development.

When this project originally went out for bid two years ago, and when it was placed on the campus' master plan, Urbana said nothing. City Council member Diane Marlin said at the meeting that Urbana must "mitigate the impact of these enormous, industrial-sized structures that will appear on our southern boundary," per a city

ordinance governing wind power installations. But Urbana has no authority over the proposed turbine. The turbine will sit on University property, held in trust for the State, and is thus exempt from local zoning rules. And, by state law, as the end-user of the power generated by the turbine, the University (or any similar landowner) cannot be required to setback the turbine more than 1.1 times the turbine's height – which is already true of the proposed location.

Currently, around 60 percent of the campus's electricity demand and all of its steam demand is met by Abbott (the coal and gas burning power plant on campus) and the rest from the grid (primarily coal burning plants around Illinois.) Burning coal produces the highest greenhouse gas emissions, and some of the highest levels of air pollutants, of any energy source. The wind turbine will displace a fraction of that reliance on coal by supplying roughly 1 percent of the campus's electricity demand and help cut the campus's \$80 million energy bill.

The turbine will serve as a

major step towards the campus's commitment in the Illinois Climate Action Plan to source 5 percent of electricity from renewables by 2015, and is part of the campus commitment to transition completely off of coal at Abbott by 2017.

The campus is moving forward to reduce its contributions towards climate change — while the city of Urbana has taken no serious action to cut its greenhouse gas emissions. The City of Urbana is playing politics with the wind turbine. The News-Gazette headline from its Nov. 16 story on the issue says it best: "Urbana council, residents hit UI over wind turbine plans." The Urbana City Council is trying to pick a fight with the University because of a long history of petty disputes, and passed the wind turbine ordinance this September for this sole purpose. We can't — and won't — let the city of Urbana's political games interfere with the future of energy and sustainability on our campus.

AMY ALLEN, junior in LAS and former Illini Media employee, for the Students for Environmental Concerns and the Student Sustainability Committee

Turbines will cause problem for residents

As neighbors who are literally going to have the proposed **University of Illinois** wind turbines in their front yard, we have several concerns about the way the UI has treated us.

The UI has made no effort to make contact with those of us who will be most directly impacted by this project.

There seems to be no concern for the people who are living nearest to this project. From the recent article in the paper, we are led to believe that the UI has more concerns for research grass than for the families living along the Philo Road/Old Church corridor. How are these turbines going to affect our cell phones, microwaves, Internet, property value and visual impact? These turbines will create shadow flicker and increase current noise levels.

What gives the UI the right to ignore the 1,500 feet setback law in effect for Champaign County? By using Google Earth, it appears to us that there are other locations with a similar elevation level that meet the setback requirement.

Surely there is an alternative site that would be less detrimental to the community.

We do not like to complain. But the UI needs to address these issues. We don't think the UI should be above the law.

Once again, it appears the UI is going to bully a project through that is beneficial to the institution and detrimental to the neighborhood.

DUANE SCHWARTZ
ROY DOUGLAS
Urbana



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News

Looking Ahead to 2013

December 3, 2010

WASHINGTON — At the request of Education Secretary Arne Duncan, a subcommittee of the department's advisory board on accreditation will develop a set of legislative recommendations for the 2013 renewal of the Higher Education Act. And though the subcommittee of the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity plans to consider how to alter the country's decentralized system of accreditation, which has been under fire in recent years amid cries for more accountability, it plans to make legislative recommendations on non-accreditation-related matters as well.

The announcement came during the second day of the reconstituted advisory committee's meeting Thursday, the group's first in more than two years. The subcommittee members, with their nomination source to NACIQI in parentheses, are as follows:

- *Chair*: Susan D. Phillips, provost and vice president for academic affairs at State University of New York at Albany (Education Department)
- Arthur E. Keiser, chancellor of the Kesier Collegiate System (House Republicans)
- William E. (Brit) Kirwan, chancellor of the University System of Maryland (Senate Democrats)
- Daniel J. Klaich, chancellor and chief operating officer of the Nevada System of Higher Education (Senate Democrats)
- Anne D. Neal, president of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (Senate Republicans)
- William Pepicello, provost and president of the University of Phoenix (House Republicans)
- Jamienne S. Studley, president and CEO of Public Advocates, Inc. (Education Department)
- *Ex officio*: Cameron C. Staples, member of the Connecticut House of Representatives (Senate Democrats)
- *Ex officio*: Arthur J. Rothkopf, president emeritus Lafayette College (House Republicans)

The subcommittee plans to host a policy forum in February, seeking commentary from the public. Phillips said the subcommittee hopes to have a set of recommendations for Secretary Duncan by December 2011. Phillips framed the subcommittee's charge in an outline distributed to NACIQI members.

"How well does our current accreditation/recognition system protect the interests of the taxpayer who is underwriting that investment in education?" reads Phillips's outline. "If we were starting now, would we design this system? How might a system we would design differ from what currently exists?"

The outline touches on a number of specific and somewhat controversial aspects of compliance and quality assurance.

"Should there be common standards for learning outcomes/student achievement (should the rule of construction stand or should there be a set 'standard' for student achievement?)" asks Phillips's outline. "Who should decide those? How should they be measured?"

After Thursday's meeting, Staples told *Inside Higher Ed* that the subcommittee was asked by Secretary Duncan "to weigh in on a broader basis" regarding the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act and not just on matters related to accreditation.

"We were certainly glad to be asked by the secretary," Staples said. "He asked us during our training session several months ago. I think it's just that the department is looking to make use of this body as a way of soliciting public input.... Given the range of expertise on the committee -- you have people from the for-profit sector, a lot of distinguished people from the nonprofit sector -- I think it's a group that will have the ability ... to shed a light on these issues."

Considering the entree given to NACIQI by the Education Department and the broad call for legislative recommendations, some observers at Thursday's meeting expressed their anxiety about the subcommittee's possible suggestions. Some members of the subcommittee, such as Neal, have made very public calls for the accreditation system to be dismantled and considerably revamped.

— David Moltz

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December 2, 2010

As State Budgets Shrink, College Advocates Seek Regulatory Relief

By Eric Kelderman

Austin, Tex.

Last year's annual conference of higher-education government-relations professionals was focused largely on ways of persuading state lawmakers to spare institutions from devastating budget cuts.

But there seems less enthusiasm for those strategies this year, with states facing a third or fourth year of budget shortfalls, a new crop of Republican governors and legislators intent on downsizing government, and a public exasperated by persistent increases in tuition and fees.

The theme at this year's conference is "Performing Under Pressure," with the recognition that much of public higher education will have to undergo a major transformation, with the goal of graduating many more students with much less support from the states.

Legislators are wary of higher education and perceive that colleges are simply asking them to "give us more money and leave us alone," said Raymund A. Paredes, commissioner of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. "I can tell you that argument doesn't work," he said.

Instead, he and other speakers urged lobbyists to press for legislative changes that would give them more regulatory autonomy, and be willing to accept strict accountability measures.

"We have to demonstrate our willingness to make fundamental changes," Mr. Paredes said.

High Expectations

Mr. Paredes and others acknowledged that higher education has a poor reputation among many lawmakers, who think of academe as a bastion of arrogance. And the public base their perceptions of higher education largely on what they know of the most elite public and private colleges, not on the thousands of smaller, less-prestigious institutions that educate the bulk of students, he said.

Francisco G. Cigarroa, chancellor of the University of Texas system, told conference attendees that the way to prove higher education's value to the public is not just by touting the prestige of private and

federally funded research, but by retaining a strong focus on improving undergraduate education.

The push to increase graduation rates is being driven both by President Obama, who has set the goal of making the United States the best-educated country in the world, and by several nonprofit organizations, such as the Lumina Foundation for Education and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which are seeking to spur innovations that will lead to better graduation rates and more efficiency in higher education.

Efforts to significantly improve college completion have already begun in earnest in states such as Indiana and Ohio, where state appropriations are now being tied to graduation rates or credit completions.

Brian Noland, chancellor of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, said that ensuring that students finish their degrees not only builds trust with the public but also is a fundamental way to improve the economic fortunes of the state.

But the challenges involved in increasing the number of degrees go beyond the fiscal and political hurdles, Mr. Noland said. In his state, as in many others, the number of high school graduates is declining, so West Virginia is trying to lure back to the classroom adults who have had some college courses but dropped out. That effort includes mailings, phone calls, and, this coming spring, setting up personal appointments between potential students and higher-education recruiters who will try to persuade them to return to college, he said.

Opportunity in Crisis

Daniel J. Hurley, director of state relations and policy analysis for the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, one of the organizations that sponsors the conference, said that there may be a small, silver lining to the difficulties facing higher education: a window of opportunity to loosen the reins of state regulation.

Colleges across the country have been chafing at state rules on hiring, construction, procurement, and, most importantly, authority over tuition, arguing that the required processes are cumbersome and costly.

Cristin Toutsis, assistant for policy analysis at the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, said several states have passed or proposed new measures in the past year that would free colleges to operate with more autonomy. For example, Louisiana lawmakers passed a law giving public universities more authority over tuition if they can meet performance benchmarks, such as improved graduation rates. Idaho passed a law that gives

the state's public colleges some freedom from rules on bidding and constructing new buildings.

The advantage of those proposals is that they may be popular with the host of new Republican state leaders who are taking a hard line on spending and have not always been traditional supporters of higher education.

In New Jersey, for example, Gov. Chris Christie, a Republican who has garnered a nationwide reputation for his devotion to cutting the state budget, has proposed five measures that would, among other things, give the state's public colleges control of their workers-compensation insurance and collective bargaining agreements with unions.

While the bill relating to workers-compensation insurance was approved and is now awaiting the governor's signature, the other four proposals face strong opposition in the Legislature, said Michael W. Klein, director of government and legal affairs for the New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities.

Mr. Hurley, of the state-colleges association, said that such bills may be the best that colleges can hope for in the coming legislative sessions: "There isn't going to be any more money."

The conference, which ends Friday, is also hosted by the American Association of Community Colleges, the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education.

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December 2, 2010

SUNY May Scale Back Top Legislative Priority and Seek Only Limited Autonomy From State

By Eric Kelderman

Rebuffed in her efforts this year to win more autonomy for the State University of New York, the system's chancellor, Nancy L. Zimpher, is considering advocating a scaled-back approach during the coming legislative session.

In this year's legislative session, Ms. Zimpher and her staff persuaded Gov. David A. Paterson to include a package of regulatory reforms that the state system argued would allow it to operate more efficiently and would offset the loss of state appropriations. Those changes included giving the system more control over tuition, purchasing, leasing property, and entering into partnerships with private companies.

All of those changes were opposed by the politically powerful union that represents staff members at the 64-campus system. The Legislature not only rejected all of the proposals, but also cut the system's appropriations by more than \$200-million.

Michael C. Trunzo, vice chancellor for government relations at SUNY, said on Thursday that the system would now consider shelving much of the package of regulatory changes and would work to build better relationships with the unions and with lawmakers. Mr. Trunzo spoke at a conference of higher-education lobbyists in Austin, Tex.

Instead of seeking the ability to set different tuition rates for different campuses, for example, the system may propose a regular, moderate multiyear increase in tuition on all campuses. Part of that increase would then be used to increase financial aid for students whose families earn too much to qualify for the state's Tuition Assistance Plan, he said.

The system would largely abandon the request to enter more easily into public-private partnerships, he said, and instead seek approval for a private housing development for senior citizens on the campus of Purchase College, Mr. Trunzo said.

The previous proposal to free the system from some state procurement rules may be limited to the purchase of goods and

exclude contracts for services, he said.

The new proposals have yet to be finalized and must be approved by SUNY's Board of Trustees in order to go forward, Mr. Trunzo said. And the issues, he added, have yet to be vetted by the unions, whose support will be necessary for the measures to have any chance of passage in New York's infamously fractious Legislature. "We don't want a fight [with the unions] as we walk in the door," he said.

Officials from Ms. Zimpher's office stressed that Mr. Trunzo was not speaking on behalf of the system and that the specifics of the system's legislative agenda have not been finalized.

"SUNY has not shelved anything," said Monica Rimai, a senior vice chancellor and the system's chief operating officer. "We are still developing our legislative strategy, and it is premature to suggest that we have decided what direction that will take."

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December 2, 2010

How 3 Graduate Deans Are Putting the NRC Rankings to Use

By David Glenn

Washington

It has been nine weeks since the National Research Council released its long-in-the-making report on doctoral programs in the United States. Much of the conversation immediately after the report's release had to do with the NRC's "ranges of rankings," which are far more complex than typical academic rankings.

But now that the dust has settled, graduate deans are focusing on the task that had been most important to them all along: digging into the raw underlying data and looking for insights about how to improve their programs.

During a session on Thursday here at the annual meeting of the Council of Graduate Schools, three deans gave status reports about what they have done on their campuses.

The deans were not exactly aglow with enthusiasm about the data set. The NRC's numbers are somewhat old; most of the information concerns the 2005-6 academic year. And some of the variables, especially those regarding faculty research productivity, were poorly constructed and measured, the deans said. But despite those limitations, they said they have learned from the NRC study.

"We reviewed the 20 major variables and found seven that we felt we could responsibly include in our annual data reports for our departments," said Janet A. Weiss, vice provost for academic affairs and dean of the Rackham Graduate School at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. "Unfortunately, only seven."

Those seven variables were median time to degree; average six-year completion rate; average number of doctorates awarded per year; proportion of first-year students with full financial support; proportion of graduates with academic plans (meaning postdoctoral fellowships or faculty jobs immediately after leaving the program); proportion of underrepresented minorities on the faculty; and proportion of underrepresented minority students.

For those seven variables, Ms. Weiss's office has created reports

comparing each Michigan program with its counterparts at 20 peer universities. She has had conversations with department chairs about how to interpret those comparisons. In at least a few cases, she said, program chairs have decided that the numbers are meaningful and that there are areas in which they need to improve.

Other Analyses

Jeffery C. Gibeling, dean of graduate studies at the University of California at Davis, did something similar, using a slightly different list of variables. In his case, he asked each Davis program to name eight or 10 counterparts that it regarded as peers. But in some of Mr. Gibeling's NRC analyses, the Davis programs turned out to appear significantly stronger or weaker on some measures than those perceived peers.

"That's one kind of conversation you can have," Mr. Gibeling said. "Are the peers really peers? Maybe, in some cases, departments need to think about competing with a different set of institutions for graduate students."

For Princeton University, one of the most illuminating elements of the NRC report has been its data about student demographics at other Ivy League universities, said William B. Russel, dean of the Graduate School at Princeton.

In certain science fields, Princeton discovered that it has a lower proportion of women and underrepresented minorities than its peers, Mr. Russel said. "In some cases, we're not doing as well as we thought," he said.

At Michigan, Ms. Weiss excluded most faculty-related variables from her list of seven, she said, because many department leaders on her campus do not believe that the faculty headcounts the NRC used are credible.

Three variables that Ms. Weiss had high hopes for ended up being faulty, she said. The NRC's interdisciplinarity variable, she said, "turned out to be a measure of how your university is organized, not a real measure of interdisciplinarity."

And the measures of students with research assistantships and teaching assistantships are not useful, she said, because students with multiple kinds of support—for example, a fellowship and a teaching assistantship—were entirely excluded from those counts.

No Simple Solution

Some people have suggested that graduate schools should maintain the NRC report's framework and update the analyses with more-current data. But Ms. Weiss said that would be a mistake. (Her audience seemed to agree. There was groaning across the room

when she mentioned the very idea of maintaining the current framework.)

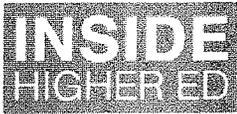
Instead, she said, graduate schools should develop new national databases that focus on elements that are most important to students and prospective students. Those might include information about career outcomes, advising, financial support, and other student resources.

One audience member made a partial defense of the NRC's work. Harvey Waterman, the associate dean for academic affairs of the Graduate School at Rutgers University, said the NRC was caught between a rock and a hard place. Graduate education is so diverse, he said, that gathering data about faculty and student experiences requires highly complex and nuanced surveys. In some cases, those surveys turned out to be too unwieldy for programs to answer accurately.

But the alternative—simple questionnaires that would yield simplistic analyses—is no better, Mr. Waterman said.

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News

How Doctoral Graduates Fare

December 3, 2010

WASHINGTON – The payoff for students who decide to pursue a doctorate is uncertain enough with today's job market. And the feeling that most colleges don't do much to track or publicize their graduates' career tracks – or lack thereof – doesn't make matters any easier.

Two graduate deans who have focused on these issues shared their experience with a packed room of colleagues Thursday at the Council of Graduate Schools' annual meeting here at a Washington hotel.

Judging by the interest in the presentation, tracking career outcomes is, as yet, an unattained goal of many graduate deans. Some of the issues standing in their way, they said, are decentralized information gathering; an inability to pay additional administrative staff to track the data consistently; and tension between faculty and deans on what constitutes a successful placement.

Despite those obstacles, spirits were high as Lynne Pepall, dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of Tufts University, did some data gathering of her own: she provided clickers for attendees to answer questions about their institutions in real time. Pepall asked the audience who tracks career data of graduates and alumni. She had anticipated the response: 9 percent answered the program or department, 12 percent said alumni relations, 15 percent said the graduate school and 59 percent said data are not tracked systematically by any of the options (the rest said "other").

"This is kind of what we were expecting. We're all in the same boat here," Pepall said. That's why the session aimed to explore "how to think about those challenges and meet them in an era where it's not easy to add on any other administrative staff" to track these data with integrity.

At Tufts, programs collected career placement data of doctoral recipients from 2005-10, broken down by discipline and postdocs. Now Pepall and her colleagues are using the information to draw conclusions about how they should be modeling different programs. One example: 90 percent of Ph.D. recipients in the arts and humanities went on to work in academe. That tells Pepall that Tufts needs to ensure arts and humanities students are prepared to be excellent teachers.

One person in the audience raised an issue she faces at a research university, and her comments were met with murmurs of agreement throughout the room. She asked the presenters whether they've been able to manage the tension among faculty members who don't want to accept that their graduates want to pursue jobs outside academe.

Pepall nodded in understanding. (The data she presented also showed that only about 30 percent of Ph.D.s in the natural and social sciences go into academe.) "It's unreasonable to expect faculty to know or do anything that isn't what they do as faculty," she said. "There's a tendency for faculty to think they own their graduate students, and so it is a tension." However, those present seemed to agree that younger faculty members tend to have a different attitude.

At the University of California at San Francisco, co-presenter and UCSF graduate dean Patricia Calarco said, surveys of faculty members did show that the majority of them are resistant to non-academic goals for their graduate students. But it's possible that students changed their minds somewhere along the way: data also showed that graduate school decreases students' confidence in their early career choice; that career preferences shift during the first three years of doctoral training; and that by graduation, one-third of students choose a non-research career path.

UCSF is using its data – which explored the disparities between what career paths students take, the paths they want to take, and the paths faculty members think they take – to figure out what sorts of opportunities it should offer students. Calarco wants to make sure students have awareness of their skills, that they understand their career options and have career planning and networking opportunities, that they develop transferable skills like writing and leadership, and that they have internship experience in their desired path.

And though it may require time and funding to track career paths of students after they graduate, there's a surefire way to assess the path they took in graduate school: don't let them leave until they complete an exit survey. "We don't let them upload their dissertation until they do," Calarco said.

— Allie Grasgreen

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