Minutes


Other Board members present included: Paul Kelly and David Yaden.

Others present included: Vice Chancellor Susan Weeks (staff to committee), Joe Holliday (CO), Bob Kieran (CO), Bob Turner (CO), Larry Galizio (CO, by phone), Charles Triplett (CO), Neil Bryant (consultant to CO), Michael Jaeger (EOU), Brad Burda (OIT), Ed Ray (OSU), Sabah Randhawa (OSU), Roy Koch (PSU), Mary Cullinan (SOU), Jim Klein (SOU), Jim Bean (UO), John Minahan (WOU), Kent Neely (WOU), and Peter Gilkey (IFS).

Chair Francesconi called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. and asked all present to introduce themselves.

ACTION

Oregon Health and Science University, M.S. in Neuroscience

OHSU Interim Provost Bob Vieira introduced the proposal for a Master of Science degree in Neuroscience, noting that the proposal is similar to others at OHSU in which there is a doctoral program with the option of receiving a master’s degree if the student has completed the work prior to being advanced to candidacy for the Ph.D. but has chosen to discontinue enrollment in the doctoral program. Having the M.S. allows students to depart the program with a tangible award, improving their competitiveness for employment. Director Miller-Jones as if having the M.S. option could lead to increased enrollment in the Ph.D. program; Vieira responded that the numbers in the doctoral program would be unlikely to change since all students entering the graduate program in Neuroscience seek the Ph.D. The proposed master’s degree would simply provide greater opportunities to the few who do not complete the Ph.D. or choose to go into other areas of teaching.

DISCUSSION

Overview of Priority Areas

Chair Francesconi reviewed the key priority areas’ focus and staffing, as displayed in the handout, Academic Strategies Committee – Focus and Staffing of Priority Areas. The Committee’s priority areas are grouped into 4 themes: OUS portfolio; access and student success; particular state workforce needs; and economic development and job creation. (NOTE: Subsequently, the thematic areas were reduced to 3: OUS portfolio; access and student success; and economic development and job creation.) All of the priority areas are listed under one of the themes, with descriptions of the focus, staffing, resource people, and strategic directions developed so far.

Francesconi noted that proposals for strategies requiring new funding will need to be considered by the Committee no later than May 2010 in order to forward Committee recommendations to the full Board. Francesconi emphasized that the approach of the Committee should be to deal with policy and budget issues, not the operations of the Chancellor’s Office or institutions, and to make recommendations to the full Board.

Miller-Jones observed that, with respect to the rural student success priority area, the work of that group must also connect to economic development concerns of rural areas, and that we need to be intentional about making those connections. Powers echoed that point, indicating that once the rural initiatives group gets under way, those initiatives could also be listed under the “economic development” theme.

President Ed Ray noted that people in the Statewide Public Services programs could be plugged in as resources for rural areas, and asked: can we identify resource groups to reach out for the other areas as well? Francesconi requested that the leads and staff in each area identify and add other resource people as needed for their areas.

Institution Missions and the OUS Portfolio

Francesconi referenced the handout, Discussion Questions Regarding Institution Missions and the OUS Portfolio, which frames the discussion around 3 broad topics: Board role and responsibility for institution missions; mission review considerations; and mission review process.

Provost Kent Neely observed that the first question must also be considered in the context of regional accreditation standards and requirements, as prescribed by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). Provost Sabah Randhawa – also a commissioner for NWCCU – described the changing role of NWCCU with its growing focus on outcomes and the connections between governance, mission, strategic focus, and outcomes.
Neely commented that Eastern Oregon University was chastised by NWCCU during its accreditation review because there is no clearly defined process at the Board level through which institutions may seek approval for mission statements. Francesconi and Powers asked that the Provosts’ Council draft such a process. Neely indicated that the Provosts’ Council would bring a draft to the next Academic Strategies Committee meeting for discussion.

Francesconi stated that it’s important to craft institutional mission statements that address how institutions will meet the needs of the state. Neely observed that mission statements should be reviewed when there are significant changes in expectations, and they reflect institutional resources, conditions, and productivity. He noted that economic pressures are forcing institutions to review many things, some of which are not under their control; institutions are challenged to balance those pressures with NWCCU requirements. Randhawa commented that there are related but not totally overlapping conversations regarding mission differentiation. Francesconi asked who or which group should tee up this conversation, including state needs and how OUS meets them – is this a task of the Provosts’ Council? Presidents and the Chancellor also need to deal with this, he said.

President Ray commented that the Board is the keeper of the OUS portfolio and the role of the presidents and chancellor is to advise the Board about what the elements should look like. He thought that it might take a year or two to settle out and then adjustments could be made as needed. Francesconi suggested that the focus/staffing document and its results would articulate the key issues and needs for the Board.

President Mary Cullinan raised a question about how much is a concern about mission statements versus a concern about the portfolio, observing that the latter is the real issue. Francesconi responded that mission statements must reflect the portfolio and NWCCU makes them even more critical, but the portfolio is the piece that is most important to the Board. “If we don’t decide this, others will decide for us,” he said.

Miller-Jones indicated that he has been hearing a lot of talk about campus autonomy and opportunities for self-determination – for example, campus level decisions to grow versus decisions coming from a higher level policy group. He argued that the Board must be more than a rubber stamp for institutional wishes; it must be able to pull back and adjust.

Neely noted that the question concerning “lead” versus “non-lead” institutions caused some concern for provosts. The term implies a bifurcation that doesn’t serve the purposes of the OUS portfolio. Neely asked, “Do we want to suggest there are ‘non-lead’ institutions within the current political context and pressures?” Provost Jim Bean added as an example the White Stag building issues, asking how the Board would weigh in on that and get to an answer.

Neely concluded that the recommendations about the OUS portfolio should not emanate from the Provosts’ Council because there are conflicting interests among members. Ray urged the Board and Chancellor to frame and recommend directions, in consultation with OUS presidents, saying that the framework and recommendations should be brought through the Academic
Strategies Committee and then to the full Board. Director Paul Kelly agreed with Ray’s suggested approach, saying that the Provosts’ Council would have input into the process, notwithstanding any conflicts. Francesconi asked that the chancellor follow up with the presidents about how to address the “lead” issue, saying he was pleased with how conflicts have been dealt with in Portland. He said that the Board needs clarity from the chancellor and presidents about which institutions serve specific parts of the state, especially Portland and Central Oregon. Powers noted that the idea of “lead” seems connected to specific regions and arose most visibly in Portland which, she observed, is “a regional institution with a big mission.” Bean argued that “lead” is a false concept, and suggested that ONAMI is a good example of a shared approach. He mentioned the “green architecture” issue, where a positive approach would be to say that Portland needs to be a leader in this area and the UO can make an important contribution. Provost Roy Koch reflected on the positive experience of bringing UO into the Portland higher education conversation with respect to its product design offerings and how they could fill a need in Portland. Francesconi noted similarly positive conversations about how PSU, OSU, and OIT can address metals manufacturing needs in Portland, concluding that “we will kill the ‘lead’ language!”

Powers raised the issue of including “sustainability” in institution missions. Director David Yaden, chair of the Board’s Sustainability Initiatives Committee, mentioned that those conversations are under way. Powers emphasized that, as with diversity, sustainability needs to be reflected in Board policy through principles on sustainability in institution missions.

President Ray noted that graduate education is an important mission element, addressing connections to economic development, global competitiveness, and the relationship to research. Francesconi directed the Provosts’ Council to take up the graduate education area, tying it to specific needs. Bean reminded the Committee and Provosts’ Council to be sure to work with the Research Council on this priority area, too.

**Update on Rural Student Success Priority Area**

Director Powers, who serves as the Board representative on the Rural Initiatives Committee created to address SB 442 requirements, reported that the committee is just beginning its work, starting with a definition of what is meant by “rural,” and defining its goals – for example, is one goal to have college participation for rural areas the same as the statewide average? The committee will address ways to more effectively meet the needs of citizens of rural Oregon through collaborations, pedagogy, and innovative organizational structures. The intent is to identify pilot projects for funding in 2011-13. Critical deadlines include February 2010 for proposed legislative changes, May 2010 for budget proposals, and October 2010 for the report to the Senate Education Committee on SB 442.

Miller-Jones said it will be important to discern how each university can participate in rural initiatives. He noted that for the state to achieve its 40-40-20 goal, it will need to target the adult population’s educational achievement; that is particularly important for Eastern Oregon because there are relatively few 18-to-24-year-olds. Bean suggested that the Academic
Strategies Committee take the lead on distributed education standards. President John Minahan pointed out that it is important for the Committee to hear from all of rural Oregon – for example, coastal Oregon – and that Bend isn’t rural Oregon. President Ray suggested that rural areas are those where it is hard to get large enough clusters of people together to make the normal way of delivering higher education possible and feasible. He said it would be important to bring online capabilities and content together with available facilities to make educational delivery work.

**Central Oregon Initiatives**

Neil Bryant, legislative consultant and Bend resident, reported on behalf of Director Kirk Shueler, who is taking the lead on behalf of the Board in addressing Central Oregon’s higher education needs. Bryant described the group that is addressing these issues, the Higher Education Assessment Team (HEAT). Economic development is a priority for this area, since Central Oregon still has an 18 percent unemployment rate, Bryant reported, and it is a region with about 200,000 people. An important issue for the Board is to define the “rules of engagement” in the Central Oregon area, primarily at the undergraduate level but potentially in the graduate area as well. The HEAT group will need to be ready within the next eight months to offer proposals for legislative funding. Francesconi directed Bryan to work with Susan Weeks to make sure this issue gets on the ASC agenda.

**Portland Student Access and Success**

Joe Holliday, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Success Initiatives, reported on behalf of Director Preston Pulliams who is taking the lead in this area. Holliday noted that Pulliams is waiting for confirmation of participation from a few more members of the resource team that will provide analysis and ideas on possible strategies and action items.

**Adjournment**

Chair Francesconi adjourned the meeting at 3:20 p.m.

*Minutes prepared by Susan Weeks*