

Thursday, August 9, 2007
3:30-5:30 p.m.
Portland State University
Urban Center Building
5th floor conference room

Meeting Notes

Board members present included: Kirby Dyess (chair), Howard Sohn, and John von Schlegell (by phone).

Others present (in person or by phone) included: Chancellor George Pernsteiner, Vice Chancellor Susan Weeks, Vice Chancellor Jay Kenton, Bridget Burns (OSAC), Tamara Henderson (Oregon Student Association), Virginia Key (EOU), Rich Linton (UO), Margie Lowe (Governor's Office), Bill McGee (DAS BAM), John Miller (EOU), Brett Rowlett (Oregon Student Association), Di Saunders (Chancellor's Office Communications), Tim Seydel (EOU), and Bob Turner (WOU/Chancellor's Office).

Introductions

Kirby Dyess welcomed participants and summarized the agenda. Howard Sohn moved to approve the minutes of the last meeting, Dyess seconded.

Updates on the Progress of the Subcommittees

a. Participation and Completion

Di Saunders reported that the Participation/Completion Subcommittee has met five times, each time focusing on different student groups, barriers to participation, and issues facing those groups (campus climate, family dynamics, etc.). The meetings have been rich and emotional. Participants are glad to have a forum in which to speak. They feel that not enough has been done so far and they are looking forward to seeing progress. Race issues are ingrained in the discussion.

George Pernsteiner asked if the subcommittee has looked at immigrant issues. Saunders reported they have mostly looked at migrant students, particularly Hispanic students, but they should expand that discussion. Pernsteiner reported that Portland Community College now has an immigrant student office; he will send that office's contact information to Saunders.

Saunders spoke about a symposium the subcommittee is sponsoring on October 11th at PSU. The purpose is to gather both leaders and “in the trenches” workers. They also have a meeting planned for September 20th in Burns and for September 10th where they’ll have a presentation by Bruce Webber on rural area issues. Please send any questions you have on the symposium or the meetings to Saunders.

b. Serving Higher Education Needs in the Portland area

Vice Chancellor Jay Kenton reported on the Portland Higher Education Subcommittee. They had their first meeting on July 17th. Twenty-two of the 35 members attended. The meeting was mostly organizational—to look at their charge, their scope of issues, etc. They had several presentations at the meeting, including those by Tom Potiowsky, a PSU economics professor and former State Economist, on the general economy and Portland’s economy in particular; Sheila Martin, director of the Institute of Portland Metropolitan Studies; and George Hough, director of the Population Research Center, on demographic factors including immigrants and our aging population. The meeting included good conversations with the industry people in attendance on topics ranging from hiring practices to what their industries need, to what efforts other states have made.

The subcommittee is organizing into two subgroups: a Graduate and Research subgroup chaired by Lesley Hallick and Tom Imeson, and an Access and Workforce Strategy subgroup chaired by Preston Pulliams and Tim Nesbitt.

The subcommittee will meet again on August 30th. Chair Jim Francesconi will provide a presentation on the combined effects of all the higher education institutions in Portland, along with examples of collaborative endeavors in other parts of the country.

The subcommittee has a homework assignment—to brainstorm ideas on increased access and affordability, reaching out to underrepresented groups, workforce and economic development, research development, finding champions and increased financial support, and the future relationship of OHSU and PSU.

At the next subcommittee meeting OHSU, OSU, OIT, and PCC will give brief presentations on their current Portland-area programs and future plans. At the following meeting in early September, the remaining groups, including PSU, UO, and MHCC, will present. Meetings for the subgroups have also been scheduled.

Chair Dyess asked if the private institutions are being included. Vice Chancellor Kenton reported that they are not at this time. Dyess suggested we keep their future plans in mind; the University of Portland, in particular, has some aggressive future plans. Gary Andeen could speak to this. Should Washington State University be included? Kenton replied that it is difficult to work with another state’s system. Chancellor Pernsteiner reported that we asked them to join in a conversation awhile ago, but they weren’t interested because of our weak economic position at that time. Dyess stated that if they are serving metropolitan-area students, they should be included. Kenton said he has some contacts he’ll look into. Pernsteiner said we should exclude the for-profit and single purpose schools. We can bring them in in the future only if we identify a

need they can fill. Columbia Sportswear wants a design program, for example. Are there other companies with similar design needs, the high tech industry perhaps? ETIC might be a good resource to answer that question. Everyone needs design these days.

Vice Chancellor Kenton suspects themes will emerge such as design and sustainability. Models like ONAMI are good examples, and a likely outcome of this process. Dyess said it will be great to identify what is already here in the area, so we know what we can build on, and know where we need to start from scratch. Kenton said we need to figure out new ways to package what we deliver. We have the resources, but we need to figure out how to pull them together and blend them.

Director Sohn said that similar themes are emerging in the various subcommittees. Dyess agreed and noted that most of the recently approved new degrees and certificates have been cross-disciplinary. Kenton closed by saying that the Subcommittee has been slow to start, but is ready to get going.

c. OUS Portfolio Development

Director Sohn reported on his Portfolio Subcommittee. The subcommittee has not met since the last meeting of this group, so there's no meeting update to give, but there has been movement.

Director Sohn has been working with Vice Chancellor Susan Weeks and they've developed a list of initial recommendations to work from going forward. They are looking at how OUS and its faculty can better connect to K-12. The subcommittee's other focus is Sustainability, particularly as a Systemwide concept. Sustainability could be a Systemwide spire of excellence, something to distinguish ourselves by—when you think Oregon, you think sustainability.

The Subcommittee will form two small task groups, one focusing on PK-20 and the other focusing on sustainability, to provide a deeper understanding of those areas and to help facilitate the contacts the subcommittee may need with faculty and other staff in those areas. Vice Chancellor Weeks commented on how she is always struck by how much cross-over there is in the focus of the four subcommittees.

Among the Portfolio Subcommittee's assumptions is that Oregon could double in population in the next 20 to 25 years. Past transplants to Oregon were well-educated, but now the trend is toward those transplants being less educated. As part of the subcommittee's work, Director Sohn expects to be working with the Provosts' Council on a program review process. They need to determine what criteria should be used to justify a new or existing program. Dyess said that this ties into access—how do we deliver everything we need to?

d. Governance and Financial Sustainability

Director John von Schlegell reported on the Governance Subcommittee. Right now they are redrafting their charter and he's been meeting individually with committee members.

There have been inquiries from the Governor's Office regarding the scope of the Governance subcommittee's work. Seriously addressing financial sustainability leads to a discussion of governance ideas, and those need to tie to our strategic plan. It's important to get a commitment from the Governor and Legislature regarding the linkage between funding and authority.

We need more control over revenue and tuition, more freedom on the expense side—salaries, PEBB/PERS, state assessments—and more flexibility over the structure of the System, to implement the strategic plan. Accountability is always an issue—micro-management vs. giving the campuses the authority to govern themselves. Director von Schlegell noted that it is a hard committee to get going, because we don't know how far along this continuum to start. We need increased controls and authority, and agreement from the Legislature that we can have authority to manage our own affairs—that they can't give mandates, rules, budget notes, etc., and then cut our funding.

Chancellor Pernsteiner said that governance has to enable us to maximize the value of what we deliver in terms of education. He noted that the work of the Portfolio subcommittee – on roles, program mix, and service delivery mechanisms – will help drive this. The governance issues include our relationship with the state, authority and financial sustainability; how we achieve our goals and strategic plans is larger than issues of governance.

Director von Schlegell said the subcommittee heads and staff need to keep in touch to coordinate efforts. Chair Dyess said that merging the financial sustainability and governance issues is a good idea. There are several things to be considered: 1) should we be executing our current autonomy differently? What items need to go to the Board, to the Chancellor, to the campus presidents, etc? Are we using our current authority levels correctly? Is the Board always the correct place to make a decision? 2) Portfolio recommendations will affect governance, if we consolidate certain things, etc. 3) In areas that are out of our control, where does it make the most sense to go after more flexibility and autonomy? Are there a few things that will have the most impact? We need to focus our efforts and make sure the decision is made at the right level. People who are too far removed can make the wrong decision. We need to remember who our shareholders are: the state, students, research grantors, school foundations, etc. We need to engage these groups in the discussion.

Director von Schlegell said we need to make sure we don't ask for things we already have permission to do. We may make a matrix of items we want to control or influence, and then put items into categories—do we need statutory approval, do we need a constitutional change, do we have the authority already, is approval not statutorily required but in reality we need to ask for it (for example, tuition increase levels). We need to make sure we make requests intelligently and strategically.

Regarding tuition increases, Chair Dyess said that while we technically have the ability to raise tuition, we actually don't because the students don't trust us to. We need to figure out how to engage them to make them feel vested, because right now they're going around us to the legislature to represent their needs. Director von Schlegell wondered how much control we can give the students if we want to run a sustainable System. Dyess said if we can engage them in the

right way, we might be surprised. Bill McGee advised that, while OUS has the authority to set tuition, we can't spend more than the legislature allows us.

Director von Schlegell said that while the subcommittee is moving slowly, they're getting on the same page and that's important, especially considering that the Legislature and Governor will need to weigh in on this. He said there are differing views on the timeline for effecting change, and he's concerned there's a danger of moving too slowly; he wanted Kirby's thoughts on that.

Chair Dyess reminded everyone that while subcommittee recommendations to the Strategic Initiatives Committee are due in November, implementation is on a different timeline. She also thanked McGee for the clarification. Kenton reminded the group that concerning tuition increases, Budget Notes play a major role.

Adjournment

Chair Dyess thanked everyone for their work and reminded them that the next meeting is September 13th.

Prepared by:

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