

STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD
to the
OKLAHOMA STATE REGENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Meeting Minutes

Sunday, December 4, 2011, 1:00 p.m.
University of Central Oklahoma, Nigh University Center

Call to Order

Chairman Sichterman called the meeting to order at 1:03 with a quorum.

Announcement of Quorum

Ms. Terlip confirmed that the meeting had been posted and filed with the Secretary of State pursuant to the Oklahoma State Statutes.

All members were present.

A quorum was present to proceed.

Guests Present

Ms. Hollye Hunt, Associate Vice Chancellor for Governmental Relations, OSRHE
Mrs. Stephanie Beauchamp, Director of Academic Programs, OSRHE
Mr. C.J. Cavin, Past President, OSGA
Mr. Blake Scott, President, OSGA

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Ms. Cook moved to approve the minutes. The minutes of the previous meeting were seconded and approved.

Planning for Higher Education Day, Ms. Hollye Hunt

Higher Education Day will be on February 21, 2012, at the Oklahoma State Capitol. Institutions wishing to talk with members are encouraged to plan meetings with their representatives. The formal program will be about an hour long in the afternoon. We will be discussing the higher regents' appropriations request. A lot of past issues will probably be coming up again.

Legislation may include guns on campus, professor teaching, tenure, teaching hours, and research scope of comprehensive universities. There may be some legislation on the Chief Information Officer. Colleges of Education may see some legislation that could affect their curriculum.

Higher Education chairmen in both chambers will be helpful. Furthermore, T.W. Shannon was selected as Speaker Designate. He and his team will be helpful to higher education.

Although the Oklahoma State Constitution insulates higher education, this argument is typically used as a last resort, and it often depends on the battle. In discussing issues with legislators, advise caution. Even though higher education may be constitutional, it doesn't mean it won't be touched.

Candidate for office filing deadlines may affect legislative session.

Large bond issue in which higher education hopes to obtain funding for the Endowed Chairs program will probably pass through Senate, but the House may hold it up. Won't be getting hopes up though.

Ms. Hunt will be glad to visit again in January. Prior to bill filing, things to discuss with students should include institutions to look at the budget, guns on campus, and any other issues which may arise.

(Copy of Oklahoma State Regents Budget Request)

Ms. Hunt commented on the FY '13 budget request, noting the enrollment and fixed costs increases. She indicated that she is not worried about cuts. Revenues are coming in strong, so that may help. Furthermore, both chambers in the Oklahoma legislature are looking at a standstill budget for this year.

Mr. Cary asked about what specifically are op-eds targeting in higher education. Ms. Hunt indicated that teaching hours and salaries are some of the many things on the list.

Economic Importance of Higher Education

The Board along with Ms. Debbie Terlip, Ms. Hunt, Mrs. Beauchamp, and Dr. McMurry viewed and discussed a PowerPoint presentation.

(A copy of Economic Importance of Higher Education Presentation was distributed to the Board.)

Update on Oklahoma Student Government Association

President Blake Scott updated us on Fall Congress. A total of five bills passed. Spring Congress will be on the first week of March at Oklahoma City University. They will be discussing some turnover on the Board of Directors during their meeting concurrent with the SAB meeting.

Presentation and Discussion of Student Veterans Issues and Policies, Ms. Beauchamp

A lot of changes to state veterans' bill have been occurring. Number of student veterans seeking a degree will increase as troops return from Iraq and Afghanistan. One of the common

misconceptions regarding student veterans is that they all have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (“PTSD”). However, this is simply not the case for all veterans. Furthermore, not all veterans will have other mental health issues associated with their combat experience.

Student veterans are like non-traditional students. They are often older, have a spouse, have children, have a job, and pay a mortgage and bills. This often complicates their ability to connect with classmates. These men and women are “making up for lost time,” and they feel the need to catch up quickly.

A question was posed about whether or not undergraduate hours are lost after so many years. Mrs. Beauchamp indicated that she was fairly certain that the hours did not expire, but she also said that it may be institution specific.

Studying can be a challenge for student veterans. They are learning again, and memory issues arise. Adjusting to a schedule can also be very difficult. On active duty, the veterans are under a rigid schedule, and now they have “infinite” free time. Their time is flexible, and they often have a hard time transitioning between these schedules.

Student veterans also face many financial concerns. The GI Bill will pay for tuition, but on a sliding scale. Other administrative concerns for student veterans are the VA certifying officials on campus. These individuals are overworked and sometimes have lack of resources.

Health issues are a common problem among student veterans. They range from Traumatic Brain Injury to PTSD. Sadly, a statistic has found that suicides in veterans are up. In fact, one statistic found that more veterans are now dying as a result of suicide than combat. Despite the need and silent cry for help, the act of seeking help can often be looked down upon and is seen as a sign of weakness by veterans. Military personnel also fear that problems could be reported to their commanding officer. Moreover, veterans also believe that campus mental health professionals don’t understand the military culture and would have a difficulty in relating to their situation while helping them work through their problems. They also do not like being singled out in class and being asked for their opinion on issues.

Ms. Gomez asked about how we can help student veterans when they don’t seek help for themselves. Mrs. Beauchamp responded by expressing the need to establish a veterans’ center and organization, giving them a place and people like them to connect with.

Ms. Tracy asked about whether there are concerns with retention. Ms. Beauchamp indicated that this is currently being researched. She underlined the importance for institutions to maintain contact with student servicemen and women. This connection cannot be neglected.

Mrs. Beauchamp presented some residency concerns. Residency is largely affected by status as an active duty or veteran. Most all rules apply for all armed services except for the National Guard. For more information about veterans and residency, board members are encouraged to contact José Dela Cruz on the State Regents staff.

Ideas for recommendations include but are not limited to ensuring our campuses can meet physical and mental needs of student veterans and a place for student veterans and servicemen and women to connect.

Discussion of Campus Visits and Research Topics

Ms. Cook visited Oklahoma City Community College in November. OCCC does not have a student government association rather they have a leadership council of the student organizations with an executive board. The campus is having difficulties with enforcing the tobacco free policies with students smoking in their cars. Ms. Cook also discussed OCCC's anti-guns on campus stance. Their main concerns were criminal backgrounds of students and gang violence. OCCC students are also interested in learning more about administrative costs at other institutions, as they think OCCC's costs are low.

Ms. Tracy has communicated with Cameron University and Western Oklahoma State College. She is hoping to meet with them soon.

Ms. Tracy discussed some problems at her institution, the University of Sciences and Arts of Oklahoma. The university has recently cut their computer science program, which has caused some conflict with students. Furthermore, the university has been having retention issues.

Mr. Saluke said that he would be visiting Western Oklahoma State College.

Mr. Cary will visit the University of Central Oklahoma next semester.

Ms. Gomez talked about her institution, Seminole State College. There has been some difficulty in starting and maintaining student organizations.

Chairman Sichterman updated the Board on the tobacco issues on the University of Oklahoma campus. He believes that the end results will most likely include designated smoking areas.

New Business

The Board discussed creating a press release for 2012 Higher Education Day. Ms. Terlip asked the Board to contact Ben Hardcastle on the State Regents staff.

Determination of Agenda for Next Meeting & Adjournment

Board members requested that Ms. Hunt return in January to give us updated information on the legislative agenda for the Oklahoma Legislature. Any other issues that arise during adjournment shall be directed to Ms. Terlip or Chairman Sichterman. The next meeting will be on Sunday, January 29, 2012, at the Nigh University Center on the University of Central Oklahoma campus. The Board adjourned at 3:02 PM.