

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

of the

BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM

Madison, Wisconsin

UW-Madison

Held in the 1820 Van Hise Hall

Thursday, December 4, 2003

1:20 p.m.

- President Marcovich presiding -

PRESENT: Regents Amato, Axtell, Bradley, Burmaster, Connolly-Keesler,
Gottschalk, Gracz, Marcovich, Mohs, Olivieri, Pruitt, Richlen,
Rosenzweig, Salas, and Walsh

ABSENT: Regents Davis and Randall

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**ACCESS TO THE BACCALAUREATE DEGREE IN WISCONSIN
AND SURROUNDING STATES**

In introductory remarks, Regent President Marcovich noted two overriding concerns for the Board and the UW System: 1) How to maintain quality of academic programs, student service programs, faculty and staff, and academic and administrative leadership in these times of extreme budget constraints; and 2) How to maintain and enhance student access to UW institutions in these difficult times. The demand for access, he remarked, comes from current and potential students and their families; from taxpaying citizens of Wisconsin in all parts of the state; and from the Legislature. The economic benefits of increasing the number of baccalaureate degree holders in Wisconsin are clear.

President Lyall pointed out that Wisconsin lags in the percentage of population holding baccalaureate degrees, with an average of 24% compared to the U.S. average of 26% and an average in Minnesota of about 30%. Those differences, she indicated, drive significant differences in income levels, the per capita income level in Wisconsin being about \$29,000, compared to the Minnesota level of about \$33,000.

To close the gap, she explained, it will be necessary both to increase access and completion rates for students in baccalaureate programs and above and also to create and attract 21st century jobs to Wisconsin.

With regard to increasing access, she observed that recent changes to streamline credit transfers between UW and WTC institutions are an important first step. More broadly, she indicated that the UW, Technical Colleges and Private Colleges all need to work as a collaborative network to address facilitation of access. In that regard, it will be important to identify who and where the underserved populations are; what the workforce needs are; what the career aspirations are of potential students; how those aspirations can be met most efficiently; what additional capacity in educational institutions, if any, is necessary to serve those students; and what role instructional technology can play in meeting student needs.

Frank Goldberg, Associate Vice President, Office of Policy Analysis and Research, began his presentation by noting that access to the baccalaureate means more than just access to higher educational institutions; it means completion of a bachelor's degree as well.

Referring to a chart showing the percentage of the population ages 25 and older with a bachelor's or higher degree in Midwestern states compared to the national average, Dr. Goldberg pointed out that the proportion of bachelor's degree holders nationally and in the region has increased steadily since 1980. However, the proportion of bachelor's degree holders in Wisconsin has lagged behind Minnesota and Illinois, as well as behind the national average.

Noting that states in the region have high school graduation rates that exceed the national average, he explained that these rates provide an opportunity in the form of a large base of people who are eligible to work toward bachelor's degrees and a challenge in the sense that they create strong demand for higher education. Demographic projections indicate a relatively stable population that will not require expansion of higher education to accommodate population growth, allowing Wisconsin to focus on increasing participation rates.

Referring to a chart on college participation, he noted that Wisconsin and other states in the region lag behind Iowa and Minnesota in the proportion of high school graduates who enroll in higher education immediately after high school. Wisconsin ranks second in the region in participation in the public 4-year sector, with a rate of 27.6%. Iowa and Minnesota, along with Illinois, have lower participation rates in these types of institutions. Iowa achieves its high overall participation rate by relying on the public 2-year sector; and Minnesota and Illinois rely on a combination of the public 2-year sector and out-of-state enrollment to offset lower participation in the public 4-year sector.

With regard to total enrollment in higher education in the region, Wisconsin ranked first in 1986 but by 2001 had been surpassed by Iowa and Minnesota. In 1986, Wisconsin, like Minnesota and Indiana, had the majority of its in-state enrollments in the public 4-year sector. Wisconsin had the smallest percentage of students enrolled in

private institutions. Illinois and Michigan had large public 2-year sectors, and Iowa relied on a combination of the public 2-year sector and a large private sector.

In 2002, the balance had shifted in Wisconsin and Minnesota, so that the public 4-year sector no longer had the majority of enrollments. In Wisconsin, this was due to growth in the 2-year sector, with relative stability in the public 4-year sector. In Minnesota, enrollments in the public 2-year sector doubled, along with a decline in public 4-year enrollments. Indiana and Iowa also doubled enrollment in the public 2-year sector.

Dr. Goldberg then discussed service to nontraditional students as another dimension of access to the baccalaureate, noting that full-time/part-time status and age are frequently used measures of identifying nontraditional students. He then referred to a chart showing that public 4-year institutions in the region primarily serve full-time students. Since 1986, there has been an increase in the proportion of students in the public 4-year sector enrolled full-time in all states in the region and a decrease in the proportion of nontraditional age students in public 4-year institutions. In Iowa and Minnesota, almost half of the students in the public 2-year sector are enrolled full-time.

In the UW System, he pointed out, access for traditional students has been protected, while nontraditional students have been underserved.

Another factor affecting baccalaureate degree production, Dr. Goldberg continued, is availability of need-based grant aid provided by the state. Wisconsin has a modest need-based program, ranking below all other states in the region except for Michigan and falling below the national average.

Turning to attainment of the bachelor's degree, he referred to a chart showing that in 1986 Wisconsin ranked first in the region in baccalaureate degrees awarded by public universities and second, behind Iowa, in total degrees. This rank reflected, in part, the fact that the private university sector in the state is relatively small. In 2001, Wisconsin continued to lead the region in bachelor's degrees awarded in the public sector, but fell to third in total degrees, behind Iowa and Indiana, which had large growth in degrees produced in the private sector.

Between 1986 and 2001, Indiana increased enrollments by 66%, Iowa by 40% and Minnesota by 26%. In Indiana, there was enrollment growth in the public 4-year, public 2-year and private sectors, the largest in the public 2-year sector, with corresponding growth in degrees in all three sectors. In Iowa, enrollment growth was confined to the private and public 2-year sectors, and there was substantial growth in degrees produced in the private sector. Minnesota had experiences similar to Iowa, differing only in that growth in the 2-year sector was accompanied by a decline in enrollment in the public 4-year sector, with degree growth primarily in the private sector.

What can be learned from the experience of neighbors, Dr. Goldberg explained, is that growth in the 2-year sector will not necessarily result in growth of degrees produced by the public 4-year sector.

In addition to degrees produced, the proportion of the population with a bachelor's degree or higher is affected by in-migration and out-migration of college educated persons. Illinois and Minnesota are the only states in the region that have a positive net in-migration of young single college educated people (YSCEs), and Wisconsin's net migration of YSCEs falls below all but Indiana and Iowa. While Wisconsin loses somewhat more YSCEs than Illinois, Minnesota and Michigan, it still ranks in the top half of all states in retaining its graduates. However, Wisconsin lags in attracting YSCEs from other states, falling behind all other states in the region except Michigan and ranking in the lowest quartile of states nationally. The ability to increase the attractiveness of Wisconsin as a destination for YSCEs could substantially reverse the brain drain and increase the proportion of the population with a bachelor's degree.

Dr. Goldberg then summarized his presentation as follows:

1. Wisconsin has a relatively small private higher educational sector and relies heavily on the UW for producing bachelor's degree graduates.
2. During enrollment management declines (1986 – 1994) and during growth periods (1995 – present) access for traditional age students has been protected. However, there has been a decline in the number of nontraditional students served.
3. Wisconsin will not be facing demographic pressures.
4. State need-based financial aid is an important factor in enabling students to seek bachelor's degrees.
5. Expansion of the public two-year sector may or may not result in increased baccalaureate degree production.
6. In order to attract college graduates to Wisconsin, the right kind and quantity of jobs must be available; increasing degree production and state economic development go hand-in-hand.

Programmatic policy options include:

1. Improving transfer between two-year and four-year institutions
2. Expanding associate degree programs on four-year campuses.
3. Expanding/developing collaborations:
 - a. UW-Colleges, UW four-year institutions and UW Extension
 - b. UW Colleges and WTCS institutions
 - c. UW four-year institutions, UW Extension and WTCS institutions
4. Expanding access to on-line course delivery.

Structural policy options include:

1. Developing joint associate degree programs:
 - a. UW Colleges and WTCS institutions
 - b. UW Colleges, UW Extension and UW four-year institutions
2. Expanding Technical College Missions
3. Developing a community college system by merging the UW Colleges and WTCS.

Financial policy options include:

1. Restoring state support for public higher education (both two and four-year)
2. Expanding need-based grant programs
3. Providing financial incentives for graduates to remain in Wisconsin
4. Providing financial incentives to attract students to Wisconsin.

Responding to questions following the presentation, Dr. Goldberg indicated that the data includes for-profit institutions in the category of private institutions.

Regent President Marcovich inquired about the dramatic growth of bachelor's degrees granted in Indiana. In reply, Dr. Goldberg explained that the state made a public policy decision to expand its educational enterprise, to increase graduation rates and to undertake aggressive economic development activities. Contributing substantially to these efforts has been the Lilly Foundation which has targeted funding to economic and educational development. Chancellor Wells added that Indiana does not have a tradition of two-year colleges and that universities have missions ranging from associate to doctoral degrees. This, he commented, is not an efficient means of education and explains in part lagging graduation rates in that state.

The discussion was concluded and the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Submitted by:

Judith A. Temby, Secretary