

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

of the

BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM

Madison, Wisconsin

The Lowell Center

Room B1A/B1B

Thursday, November 6, 2003

1:15 p.m.

- President Marcovich presiding -

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

ABSENT: Regent Gracz

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**UW SYSTEM AND WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM  
CREDIT TRANSFER**

Welcoming President Richard Carpenter and Vice President Deborah Mahaffey of the Wisconsin Technical College System, Regent President Marcovich expressed pride in the collaborative efforts that have guided past agreements between the two systems, as well as the transfer proposals being discussed at this meeting. Students throughout the state, he remarked, have benefited from the work that has been done and the agreements that have been forged.

Reviewing the background of the relationship between the two systems, President Lyall noted that the WTC System is responsible for occupational and technical training, with college-parallel missions at Milwaukee, Madison, and Nicolet Technical Colleges. The UW's mission is to provide baccalaureate, graduate and professional education, with faculty having primary responsibility for the curriculum and for setting degree requirements. Section 36.31 of the statutes requires both boards to agree before either can extend its mission. The purposes of these separate missions, she indicated, is to prevent duplication of programming and wasteful expenditure of resources.

She explained that the matter of credit transfer has been approached with two goals in mind: First, to avoid mission duplication; and second, to facilitate student success. In addition to collaboration on credit transfer, the two systems have collaborated on purchase of software and other technology that have saved a great deal of money, as well as in sharing of facilities around the state.

With regard to numbers of transfers, President Lyall indicated that last year about 2,600 students transferred to the UW from the Technical Colleges and about 2,500 transferred to the Technical Colleges from the UW. With the systems' missions being separate and complimentary, she observed, students should be expected and encouraged to move back and forth between the systems to obtain the kinds of educational opportunities that they need.

Noting that most of the growth in transfers has occurred in non-college-parallel programs, President Lyall explained that the increase resulted from successful efforts to facilitate student transfer. The on-line Transfer Information System provides a powerful educational planning tool for students, parents and guidance counselors. The development of more than 450 articulation agreements and a growing number of 2+2 programs also have been popular and have facilitated transfer. In addition, ombudsmen have been appointed in each system to resolve individual cases where transfer difficulties have occurred.

The proposals before the Board, she indicated, were designed to take the next steps in expanding transfer opportunities. While they were worked out collaboratively by the two systems, they still would need to go through the UW's shared governance process. If the resolution were approved, a system-wide working group of faculty and administrators would be charged with implementing the plan by fall of 2004.

In response to a question by Regent Mohs, President Lyall explained that faculty will make determinations on transferability on the general education courses proposed by the Technical Colleges.

Assistant Vice President Larry Rubin prefaced his discussion of specific parts of the resolution by first noting that the foremost objective in considering transfer initiatives is to ensure that students are successful in their degree objectives and by describing the two types of associate degrees offered by the Technical Colleges. The first is the Liberal Arts Associate Degree, which is provided by the college-parallel programs at Madison, Milwaukee, and Nicolet Technical Colleges. The other is the Applied Associate Degree, offered in all districts, that generally consists of one-quarter general education courses and three-quarters occupational and technical courses.

Referring to Part I of the resolution, concerning transfer of occupational and technical courses, Mr. Rubin explained that under current policy those types of courses could only transfer to a UW institution if they were included as part of a program-to-program articulation agreement. The proposed change would enable institutions to transfer occupational and technical courses on a course-by-course basis without having to have an articulation agreement. Each institution would have the opportunity to review the courses and make transfer decisions.

Part II, he continued, refers to the general education component of the Applied Associate Degree. Under current practice, each WTCS institution sends these courses for review to one or more UW institutions, which are enabled to accept up to 15 credits and an additional two courses in mathematics and science for a total of about 25 credits. This process, he noted, is confusing to students since not all institutions receive or act on course transfer decisions at the same time. Under the proposed resolution, the Technical College System would combine mathematics and science into their general education component and then develop a list of general education core courses. This list can be sent to each UW institution at the same time for review. The results will show not only if a particular course will transfer, but also how it will apply toward the general education or other degree requirements at a particular institution. This information would be put on the Transfer Information System so that students can easily determine which courses will transfer to which institutions.

The Technical Colleges may also consider making courses in the general education core comparable throughout the system which would facilitate review by UW institutions. A list also could be developed of courses that will transfer across the board to all UW institutions. This would be particularly helpful to students who may not know at the outset to which UW institution they wish to transfer. Finally, incorporating mathematics and science into the general education component will enable sending a clear message to students that up to 30 core credits will transfer and be applied as appropriate to the selected degree program.

Regent Bradley asked if, under the proposed policy, there could still be a situation in which a course might be accepted for transfer by half of the UW institutions and not by the other half. Dr. Rubin replied that, while such a result would be possible, experience has shown that it would not be likely.

Dr. Rubin then turned to Part III, concerning degree completion programs. As a result of agreements reached in 2000, a number of 2+2 programs had been developed that transfer to one or more UW institutions. As an example, he cited the nursing program, through which a student who completes an associate degree in nursing at any of the Technical Colleges can transfer 60 credits to any UW nursing program toward completion of a BSN degree. What is proposed is development of a new template for these programs that will show not only how courses transfer, but also how they apply toward the degree and what courses are left to take. Students will be provided with a copy of the agreement applying to their programs, so that they can be assured that if they successfully complete the courses as indicated, they will receive their degrees.

With regard to Part IV, concerning a credit transfer contract, Dr. Rubin explained that current practice is to make transfer information available to students through the institution to which they plan to transfer and through the Transfer Information System. Many students, however, do not use these resources and wait until they actually transfer to find out how their courses will count toward their degree. The transfer contract is a strategy to encourage students to plan earlier by providing a document that assures course transfer as indicated.

Part V refers to Liberal Arts Associate Degrees, from which UW institutions currently accept up to 72 credits for transfer. The problem that students can encounter is that those courses do not always meet the specific general education requirements of a particular campus, causing the student to have to take more courses. For transfer within the UW System, the solution was to enact a policy that satisfactory completion of an associate degree at one institution automatically would satisfy all of the university-wide general education requirements of the receiving institution. What is proposed in Part V is to apply a similar accommodation for students who graduate from a Technical College Liberal Arts degree program.

Noting that Part VI does not relate specifically to credit transfer, Dr. Rubin explained that it recognizes the concern that prospective students who want to earn an associate or bachelors degree may not have access because of location, enrollment limitations, or other reasons. To address that concern, the Technical Colleges had proposed increasing the number of college-parallel programs within that system. What is proposed in the resolution is a broader look at options for expanding access to baccalaureate degrees.

In conclusion, Dr. Rubin expressed the view shared by UW and WTCS colleagues that this plan will go a long way toward enhancing transfer opportunities for students and increasing access to degree programs, which will result in expansion of baccalaureate degree holders in Wisconsin.

Regent Marcovich asked if the principles of providing accommodation for transfer students and of maintaining quality were in any way at odds with each other. Dr. Rubin replied that they would not be in conflict with one another as long as care is taken to adhere to the goal of setting students up for success.

Regent Amato, President of the WTCS Board, thanked Dr. Rubin for his work and indicated that the Technical College System is comfortable with the language presented in the resolution. He felt real progress has been made, particularly in the last six months.

In response to a question by Regent Connolly-Keesler, Dr. Rubin explained that there are a number of options for increasing access to baccalaureate degrees. One way would be to expand the number of Technical Colleges that offer college-parallel Liberal Arts Associate Degrees. Another would be for the UW Colleges to join with the Technical Colleges to offer online associate degree programs. After completing the associate degree programs, these students could transfer to institutions offering baccalaureate degree programs.

If the proposals were implemented, Regent Bradley asked what the difference would be for a student who enrolled in a Technical College liberal arts program versus attending one of the UW Colleges. In reply, Dr. Rubin indicated that there would not be a significant difference to students between those options.

After completing his presentation, Dr. Rubin introduced UW-Whitewater Provost Richard Telfer to speak about the Academic Advisory Group that would oversee

implementation of these initiatives. The group consists of representatives of each four-year campus, the UW Colleges and UW-Extension, with Provost Telfer and Ruth Williams, of UW-Milwaukee, serving as co-chairs.

Provost Telfer described the group's charge as follows:

- 1) To ensure that the recommended initiatives are implemented in a way that enhances student success, so that the courses accepted for transfer adequately prepare students for continuing their education and obtaining a baccalaureate degree.
- 2) To communicate with faculty and staff at all institutions about the initiatives;
- 3) To identify ways to ensure that implementation of the initiatives will be consistent with the missions of both the UW System and the WTC System.
- 4) To identify steps necessary to implement the initiatives, including identifying any challenges that may be encountered.

Regent Davis inquired about the size and diversity of the Advisory Group, to which Provost Telfer replied that the group consists of 15 members and that the effort in composing it had been to include people who have a variety of different roles on campus and different perspectives.

#### **Comments by Regent Davis**

Stating her pride in being a member of the Board of Regents, Regent Davis commented that she had felt offended by the extent of recent scrutiny of the board's actions. She remarked that there should be balance in what is said and indicated that she did not intend to comment on matters that are not related to the pressing issues facing higher education for the state and students. While mistakes had been made, she felt important issues were being obscured by focusing on small errors. As chair of the Working Group on Research and Public Service, she had heard from business leaders, legislators and students that their interest and concern focuses on quality of education provided to students, how business could better be helped by the university, and how partnerships could be increased with the Technical Colleges, businesses and communities. While she did not wish to minimize the public's need to know, she urged that attention be turned to the issues that are most important to the state.

Upon motion by Regent Connolly-Keesler and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

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Judith A. Temby, Secretary

