

## MINUTES

EDUCATION COMMITTEE, BOARD OF REGENTS  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Madison, Wisconsin  
March 10, 2005

Regent Olivieri convened the meeting of the Education Committee at 2:04 p.m. Regents Olivieri, Axtell, Burmaster, Davis, and Richlen were present.

1. Approval of the minutes of the February 10, 2005, meeting of the Education Committee.

I.1.a.: It was moved by Regent Axtell, seconded by Regent Davis, that the minutes of the February 10, 2005, meeting of the Education Committee be approved.

The resolution PASSED unanimously.

2. Follow-up Discussion of All-Regent Sessions

a. Review of Regent Policy on Tuition and Financial Aid

The Education Committee engaged in further discussion of the full-Board presentation on Regent Policy on Tuition and Financial Aid heard earlier in the day. Regent Richlen reported that students were becoming mobilized to oppose the federal budget's proposed cuts to student aid. Over 85 students from ten campuses around the System would be spending their spring breaks in Washington, DC, lobbying federal officials and members of Congress. The Committee discussed ways the UW System might reach out to parents, both to help them get involved in lobbying their state legislators, and also to help parents understand the complicated world of financial aid. Many prospective students and their families are deterred from even applying to the UW System because of the "sticker shock" of tuition and the complicated process for applying for financial aid.

UW-Madison Provost Peter Spear informed the Committee that several states have created programs that guarantee students will graduate debt-free if they or their families have income below a certain level. North Carolina has such a program (the Carolina Compact) at its flagship institution, as does Illinois (the Illinois Promise). UW-Madison had explored the creation of such a program but the way the Governor's budget is packaged precludes that possibility. Sharon Wilhelm, Associate Vice President of Policy Analysis and Research, informed the Committee that UW System Administration had looked into such a program but concluded that it would be prohibitively expensive. She added that the Carolina and Illinois programs are, in fact, financed mostly through Foundation money. The Committee discussed a few other options by which financial aid support might be increased, including the possibility of having different tuition for different income levels, and whether the Higher Education Aids Board allocation process could be changed.

Regent Olivieri expressed his hope that the Board would continue to look for creative and viable options for increasing financial aid and for guaranteeing that more students from the lowest income quintiles would gain access to the levels of financial aid that would make it possible for them to be in school. He urged the Board to look for short-term options in the months to come, as well as longer-term solutions for the years to come. Sharon Wilhem reminded the Committee that there are two System committees currently at work on developing other funding options for financial aid in order to reverse what is a troubling trend as the poorest Wisconsin citizens cannot gain access to higher education because of a complex and under-financed system.

## b. Accountability Report

The Education Committee also continued discussion of the full-Board presentation on “Achieving Excellence,” the UW System’s annual Accountability Report. Regent Richlen asked if there were any clearly identifiable reasons as to why the numbers of non-traditional students were declining so much (a fact that had been reported earlier in the day). Interim UW Colleges Chancellor Margaret Cleek replied that for the UW Colleges, it seems to be the dramatic increase in tuition that is keeping non-traditional students away, although the Colleges have not collected any hard data. The Committee queried whether the two-year campuses should maybe focus more explicitly on non-traditional students, since the four-year institutions are ending up with more traditional-aged ones. Interim UW-Extension Chancellor Marv Van Kekerix noted that there was a real problem in defining non-traditional students: the boundaries between traditional and non-traditional have become more permeable and it is not just age that marks the difference. He also explained that it is far more efficient to educate traditional-aged students (as the comprehensives well know), than for example, place-bound students who tend to be “non-traditional.” He added that place-bound students make enormous contributions to their communities, and the UW System should work hard to accommodate their needs. Work is being done to come up with a more helpful and realistic definition for “non-traditional” students.

The Committee also discussed whether the existing goals of the Accountability Report are still applicable or whether some revision might be in order, given the number of years that have elapsed since the first prototype for the report was developed in 1993. Some of the goals might need to be revised upward if the UW System and the institutions have been consistently meeting them in recent years. Others might need to be revised down, the goal for study abroad participation being the most obvious example. Senior Vice President Marrett observed that UW System Administration is currently engaged in a reexamination of the goals. She also noted that the data in the report is not simply used for external reporting but that the institutions receive all sorts of additional data that they then use for continuous improvement purposes.

In response to an earlier question from Regent Davis on pre-college programs, Senior Vice President Marrett reported that the Office of Policy Analysis and Research is in the process of collecting and sorting a lot of data from disparate programs that will be shared with the Board once the results are further analyzed. The Committee also questioned whether the Accountability Report could revise its number of graduates systemwide to include transfer students in the count. Currently, transfer students are excluded from institutional graduation rates (which, following national data collection practice, count only first-semester freshman who complete their degrees at the same institution). For some institutions—Senior Vice President Marrett named UW-Superior as one of them—transfers constitute a huge number of their students. The revised counts can be found in the Joint Administrative Committee on Academic Programs (JACAP) report, which is referenced in the appendix of the Accountability Report. The Committee requested that the numbers in their entirety go into next year’s “Achieving Excellence” Report, either in a long footnote or a separate appendix.

Both Regents Davis and Olivieri reiterated their interest in seeing the Accountability Report used to organize the Board’s, or at least the Education Committee’s, agendas in the future, as a means of unifying Regent discussion, determining priorities, and informing policy-making.

## 3. Report of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Senior Vice President Marrett framed her report by pointing out the extent to which all the different forms of accountability in which the UW System and its institutions engage—whether it’s the annual report or Plan 2008—require courage, honesty, and leadership. She observed that the Accountability Report and Plan 2008 are two examples which lead to honest reckoning of shortcomings by UW System and by the individual institutions, not, however, as indications of failure, but, rather, as pointing to areas that require change. She reminded the Committee of the national prominence of the UW System’s annual accountability reporting: the UW System is doing it well, ahead of the curve, and deserves credit for doing so.

a. Ongoing Work on Plan 2008

The Committee discussed the possibility of conducting a systemwide climate study. This possibility was not ultimately included in the resolution on Plan 2008 Phase II passed by the Board in February, but was recognized by Senior Vice President Marrett’s office and others as something that needs to be done. Senior Vice President Marrett observed that a systemwide climate study would require buy-in from the institutions, in particular because it will be expensive and resources will need to be reallocated. The plan is to incorporate a broad-based climate study into the cycle of other surveys used by OPAR to compile the Accountability Report (like the NSSE or National Survey on Student Engagement). It would therefore become an ongoing survey, not done just once and then forgotten. She asked that the Committee keep in mind that the Accountability Report is just a summary of what are rich data fields collected by UW System Administration and the institutions. The data collected from the Climate Survey would be used widely to assess campus and classroom climate, and then to develop strategies and initiatives for improvement.

The Committee next discussed the Diversity Accountability Report Card that the Board resolved in February to be developed by June. Its purpose will be to develop a data-rich “culture of evidence” (a term taken from Dr. Estela Bensimon’s terminology for the Diversity Scorecard) by which to diagnose historical barriers to student achievement, and then to identify strategies to address and improve them. Several Committee members noted that MATC had used and adapted a version of the Diversity Scorecard for its own needs. Regents Davis and Richlen encouraged the Senior Vice President and her staff to consult with MATC in developing and adopting a model for the UW System. In response to several Regent questions, Senior Vice President Marrett assured the Committee that Chancellor participation in Phase II implementation continue, along with involvement from Provosts and Faculty Representatives as well.

b. Allied Health Accreditation

The Education Committee continued its ongoing discussion of allied health accreditation and the problem of “degree creep,” in which changing requirements, mandated by accreditation agencies, result in elevating the degrees students need to enter allied health professions. Associate Vice President Ron Singer advised that this was not a new problem: the Board of Regents had set policy on this back in 1987, and revised it in 1999. The Committee expressed its satisfaction with the individual allied health programs that had come before it in recent months, including the doctorate in audiology that the Committee would consider for approval later in the day. Regent Olivieri noted, however, his continuing concerns about access, additional costs for students, and elevated time- and credits-to-degree. He acknowledged the UW System’s abiding concern with preparing students responsibly and adequately in what are admittedly rapidly evolving professions. Yet, he continued, the Committee was also looking for meaningful ways in which the Board could have an impact in preventing unnecessary degree elevation and the harm that has on UW students.

In response to Regent questions, UW-Madison Provost Peter Spear admitted that both he and Chancellor Wiley felt that there was nothing the Board or the institutions could really do to have an impact on the accreditation agencies. The accreditation agencies, he reported, are themselves forced to change their requirements because of state certification and licensing mandates. Calling it a “vicious circle,” Provost Spear noted that if a prestigious institution like Madison decided to forego accreditation, its graduates would not be certified to practice in the state of Wisconsin. Provost Spear informed the Committee that there are national higher education groups working on these issues and that they have collectively determined that they should focus their efforts on influencing accreditation criteria to measure outputs and learning outcomes (as opposed to inputs like the number of faculty or volumes in a library at a particular institution). UW-Milwaukee Interim Provost Rita Cheng added that an institution can decide to keep credits and tuition to a minimum for certain of its allied health programs, as Milwaukee has done. Milwaukee has many students returning for re-certification and they need flexibility in programming. UW-La Crosse Provost Sue Hammersmith cautioned the Committee to beware of over-generalizing about accreditation agencies since there are vast differences among them.

Regent Olivieri expressed his conviction that it is the responsibility of the Board of Regents to keep credit-to-degree requirements reasonable for students and to convey concerns to legislators, who may have some influence on state licensing agencies. He also asked that faculty and staff in allied health programs also take a stand as much as possible. He asked that Senior Vice President Marrett work with him in developing a resolution for next month that would recommend certain action steps, and a leadership role for the Board of Regents in keeping credits-to-degree and costs to students in allied health professional degree programs to a minimum.

c. Gathering Stakeholder Input: Cooperative Extension Needs Assessment

UW-Cooperative Extension gave a presentation to the Education Committee on their needs assessment process, i.e., their institutional process for gathering stakeholder input. Arlen Leholm, the Dean of Cooperative Extension, described the elaborate needs assessment process as one that establishes a two-way dialogue between the UW System and the state’s citizens. Cooperative Extension exists in all 72 of Wisconsin’s counties and directs its programming toward the different needs and demographics of each county’s population and economy. Cooperative Extension has processes in place for making sure Extension is visible, relevant, and has an impact on citizens all over the state. In response to questions from Regent Davis, Dean Leholm described some of the specific programs in Milwaukee and how they were designed to specifically address the needs of local populations.

The presentation led to a brief discussion of the response the UW System has thus far gotten to its proposed merger of the Colleges and Extension. President Reilly recounted to the Committee some of the responses he has been getting, both about the proposed merger and the Kreibich proposal to fold the two-year campuses into the four-year. The merger proposal has been receiving fairly positive feedback and President Reilly had recently had the opportunity to present the idea more formally in a Joint Legislative Hearing. President Reilly told the Committee they would be receiving shortly a copy of the letter he sent to the Joint Committee, which respectfully raised questions and issues concerning the Kreibich proposal.

4. Program Authorizations – Second Readings

The Committee next heard second readings of the two programs first presented in February: the M.A. in Women’s/Gender Studies at UW-Madison; and the Joint Doctor of Audiology at UW-

Madison and UW-Stevens Point. Before taking action, Regent Olivieri asked for clarification on some lingering questions concerning credits-to-degree for the consortial Doctor of Audiology. The Committee was reassured by some of the program faculty present at the meeting that the increase in credits from the Master's to the Doctorate would add value to the students' experience and to their preparation as practicing audiologists. The additional requirements would also add oversight opportunities for faculty to make sure that students are spending their time in quality externships that contribute to their overall preparation as practitioners.

I.1.d.(1): It was moved by Regent Davis, seconded by Regent Richlen, that, upon recommendation of the Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the President of the University of Wisconsin System, the Chancellor be authorized to implement the M.A. in Women's Studies/Gender Studies, UW-Madison.

The resolution PASSED unanimously.

I.1.d.(2): It was moved by Regent Axtell, seconded by Regent Richlen, that, upon recommendation of the Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and the President of the University of Wisconsin System, the Chancellors be authorized to implement the Joint Doctor of Audiology, UW-Madison and UW-Stevens Point.

The resolution PASSED unanimously.

Resolutions I.1.d.(1) and I.1.d.(2) were referred as consent agenda items to the full session of the Board of Regents at its Friday, March 11, 2005, meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.