

## MINUTES

EDUCATION COMMITTEE, BOARD OF REGENTS  
1820 Van Hise Hall  
Madison, Wisconsin  
September 6, 2007

Regent Davis convened the meeting of the Education Committee at 1:40 p.m. Regents Davis, Crain, Cuene, Loftus, Spector, and Thomas were present.

1. Approval of the minutes of the June 7, 2007, meeting of the Education Committee

I.1.a.: It was moved by Regent Spector, seconded by Regent Thomas, that the minutes of the June 7, 2007, meeting of the Education Committee be approved.

The resolution PASSED unanimously.

2. Education Committee Priorities for 2007-08

Regent Davis asked that the Committee begin to identify a set of Education Committee priorities for 2007-08 that would build on the full Board's morning discussion of the UW System Strategic Framework. Recognizing that some of the priorities from the previous year would still warrant the Committee's attention, she asked Senior Vice President Martin to review the Committee's major areas of focus from the previous year.

Senior Vice President reiterated the Committee's guiding questions and key agenda topics from 2006-07, enumerating in the process some of the specific presentations, action items, and discussions engaged in by the Committee. These included: guidelines and criteria for transfer between the UW System and the Wisconsin Technical College System; an overview of charter schools with a focus on the roles of the Board, UW-Milwaukee, and the Department of Public Instruction in authorizing new charter schools; diversity broadly construed with presentations on the Equity Scorecard project and a Plan 2008 progress report; and the approval of eight new baccalaureate, four master's level, three doctoral, and one collegiate transfer associate's degree programs. Dr. Martin reminded the Committee that it had also spent a significant amount of its meeting time last year in consideration and then approval of the UW System's Holistic Admissions policy.

The review of its 2006-07 activities led the Committee to discussion of whether or not, in hindsight, it had used its time well. Regent Spector asked for a more detailed account of how the Committee had spent its time in the last year, with the goal of improving efficiency and ensuring that the Committee's time would be spent on substantive topics and discussion. Senior Vice President Martin responded that, with the help of General Counsel Pat Brady, she would explore whether some of the more routine business items could be removed from the Committee's agenda and acted upon through delegated authority or some other, more efficient process. She mentioned faculty personnel rules and statutorily required annual reports like the Undergraduate Drop Report as examples of routine items that might be handled in other ways. Regent Loftus asked that she distinguish in her review between statutorily required reports and those required by Regent policy.

Regent Davis requested that, in revisiting the reporting requirements, the Committee be mindful of what adds value and what does not. Dr. Martin concurred that the intent was not to short-circuit discussion by the Regents but, rather, to allow for meaningful conversation and exchange.

Regent Crain observed that she had mixed feelings about eliminating certain topics for Committee action and discussion because of all that was learned from, and about the campuses. She added that the Committee really needs to have one guiding question, mentioned earlier: What should higher education in Wisconsin look like? Regent Davis agreed that the Committee should identify its 2007-08 priorities through that lens.

The Committee then engaged in a wide-ranging discussion covering a variety of topics. Committee members agreed that the charter school discussion postponed until November was still important and Regent Loftus asked that Professor John Witte of UW-Madison be invited to share his newly published research on charter schools in Wisconsin. He also raised the issue how the UW System sets tuition, in particular amid competing perceptions that it is either too high or low. Regent Crain observed that the Financial Aid and Tuition Working Group was working on that very issue. Regent Cuene asked that the transfer topic remain on the list of Committee priorities in the form of a focus on transfer within UW System institutions.

In response to a suggestion about Advanced Placement courses by Regent Loftus, Senior Vice President Martin suggested the overarching topic of high school preparation and college readiness, with attention paid to such initiatives as Project Lead the Way and the American Diploma Project. Several Committee members pondered how best to approach the topic of program array, noting that institutional program array and course offerings fell under the purview of faculty governance. Regent Spector asked that Senior Vice President Martin and staff determine how to broaden the topic of program array to be inclusive of shared governance. Regent Spector also asked that the Committee consider teacher education and how to facilitate dialogue between the UW System and K-12 schools, calling teacher preparation a major public policy issue both in Wisconsin and nationally.

Regent Davis observed that all aspects of diversity remained relevant to the Regents' agenda, in particular the post-Plan 2008 framework which needed to be determined in the coming year. Regent Thomas asked that the Committee consider the use of internship and other experiential learning programs as an essential part of a college education. Regent Davis then opened up the discussion to include Chancellors, Provosts and others in attendance.

UW-Extension and Colleges Chancellor David Wilson requested that, as the System moves toward greater collaboration with other entities, the Committee should talk about preserving what is known around the world as the hallmark of a UW degree: excellence, rigor, and academic quality. UW-Milwaukee Chancellor Carlos Santiago suggested that, as more UW campuses are building student housing, attention needed to be paid to living-learning communities, what they are and how they operate. UW-Green Bay Chancellor Bruce Shepard raised the question of how many four-year institutions the UW System wants and/or needs, and asked for a dialogue on the topic that takes into consideration resources, the needs of the state, and capital budgets. Several Regents agreed that this issue, central to the future of the UW Colleges and the UW System as a whole, was important to undertake.

UW-Eau Claire Provost Steve Tallant asked the Committee to think about what UW graduates need to look like fifteen-to-twenty years from now, with a focus on the kinds of skills, knowledge, and abilities they will need. UW-Green Bay Provost Sue Hammersmith observed that people make conceptual statements about the eroding quality of the UW System. She proposed that the Committee look carefully at indicators of quality to determine if, in fact, the quality of the UW System has eroded. Each UW institution has meaningful assessments of quality but a broad, collective, and longitudinal assessment has not yet been undertaken and should be. Regent Cuene agreed that the Committee could use an education on assessment.

UW-Oshkosh Provost Lane Earns commented that some of these topics were very broad and seemed to belong to the Think Tank agendas being set up as part of the UW System Strategic Framework process. He also proposed that the Committee keep global education and international experiences on its radar screen. Senior Vice President Martin responded that, in moving forward with the creation of the Committee's set of priorities, certain topics will be flagged as within the purview of the Think Tanks. She expressed her hope, however, that the work of the Think Tanks could be integrated with that of the Education Committee as part of a shared agenda.

UW-Stevens Point Provost Mark Nook raised the related issues of the recruitment of international students and the ability of UW System students to travel and study abroad. Regent Loftus stated that the UW System has a relatively small number of international students, who generally come to study a small number of disciplines or programs. Cost is the impediment for many international students. The European Union, he added, is now synchronized to foster greater international student attendance and persistence at European universities. He requested data on international students: how many there are, and where and what they study. Regent Thomas asked that the Committee have a substantive discussion on what is meant by multiculturalism and how the UW System works to ensure that its students are multi-culturally prepared.

UW-Milwaukee Provost Rita Cheng requested that the topic of accountability, a priority from 2006-07, stay on the list for 2007-08, and also asked that attention be paid to co-curricular activities since they constituted a significant component of the student experience. In concluding the discussion, Regent Davis instructed Senior Vice President Martin and her staff to return next month with a list of the proposed priorities, using the strategic framework as an organizing lens.

### 3. Committee Business

#### a. UW-Green Bay Mission Revision – Second Reading

Regent Davis reminded the Committee that revised missions require Board approval in a two-part process. In June, UW-Green Bay presented its revised mission to the Education Committee for a first reading. The institution held a public forum on the revised mission in July, at which Regent Cuene presided. Regent Cuene commented that she was pleased to have chaired the forum as an alumna of UW-Green Bay and that there was positive reaction to the core values reflected in the revised mission statement.

I.1.c.(1): It was moved by Regent Cuene, seconded by Regent Crain, that, upon recommendation of the Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay and the President of the University of Wisconsin System, the Board of Regents approves UW-Green Bay's revised mission statement.

The resolution PASSED unanimously.

#### b. UW-Stevens Point – Expansion of the Board of Visitors

Regent Davis noted that on rare occasions, the Education Committee was required by statute to approve the expansion of institutional Boards of Visitors. UW-Stevens Point was seeking approval to expand its Board of Visitors, known as the Chancellor's Advisory Council, from fifteen to twenty-five members.

I.1.c.(2): It was moved by Regent Cuene, seconded by Regent Loftus, that, upon recommendation of the Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and the President of the University of Wisconsin System, the Board of Regents authorizes the expansion of the UW-Stevens Point Board of Visitors.

The resolution PASSED unanimously.

c. UW-Eau Claire – Revised Faculty Personnel Rules

I.1.c.(3): It was moved by Regent Crain, seconded by Regent Cuene, that, upon recommendation of the Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and the President of the University of Wisconsin System, the Board of Regents approves the amendments to the UW-Eau Claire Faculty Personnel Rules.

The resolution PASSED unanimously.

d. UW-Milwaukee – Revised Faculty Personnel Rules

Prior to acting on the revised faculty personnel rules at UW-Milwaukee, Regent Spector sought clarification on the proposed changes. Chancellor Santiago explained that the proposed changes would codify existing practice in which, as was the case at many institutions, the tenure decision for probationary faculty would be made in the sixth year. The seventh year would then serve as the terminal year in the case of non-renewal.

I.1.c.(4): It was moved by Regent Cuene, seconded by Regent Thomas, that, upon recommendation of the Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the President of the University of Wisconsin System, the Board of Regents approves the amendments to the UW-Milwaukee Personnel Rules.

The resolution PASSED unanimously.

e. UW-Parkside – Authorization to Recruit a Provost and Vice Chancellor

I.1.c.(5): It was moved by Regent Spector, seconded by Regent Thomas, that the President of the University of Wisconsin System be authorized to recruit for a Provost and Vice Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Parkside, at a salary within the Board of Regents salary range for university senior executive salary group one.

The resolution PASSED unanimously.

4. Report of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

The Report of Senior Vice President Rebecca Martin covered three separate items, the first of which led to Regent action.

a. Establishment of a Third Academic Staff Regents Award for Program Excellence

Regent Connolly-Keesler joined the Committee to introduce a motion to add a third Academic Staff Regents Award for program excellence to the existing array of Regent-sponsored faculty and staff awards. Senior Vice President Martin explained that the item came before the Committee based

on Regent recommendations made last spring. The Regents Teaching Excellence Awards, to be given the next day, had annually recognized two excellent teachers among UW System instructional staff, and one academic program or department for more than a decade. Since 1998, she continued, the Board of Regents had also made two awards to administrative and professional academic staff members at UW System institutions. When the two individual Academic Staff Regents Awards were given last May, there was discussion about adding a third award for academic staff—both in recognition of the large number of quality academic staff programs, and as a complement to the Regents Teaching Excellence Award given each year to an Academic Program or Department.

Senior Vice President Martin announced that funding for this additional award had been found, and that it would recognize the important role played by academic staff in supporting students and their success. Each UW institution would be asked to nominate one program composed primarily of academic staff members and demonstrating excellence of performance, initiative and creativity, and outstanding achievement in support of the university's mission. UW System Provosts were in strong support of this additional program award.

In reading the motion, Regent Connolly-Keesler expressed her deep satisfaction that the Regents would bestow this additional award and suggested that Wisconsin Public Radio provide coverage of the ceremony.

I.1.d.(1): It was moved by Regent Crain, seconded by Regent Loftus, that the Board of Regents approves the establishment of the Academic Staff Regents Award for Program Excellence.

The resolution PASSED unanimously.

**b. Report on 2006 Undergraduate Drop Rates**

The Committee then engaged in discussion on the UW System's annual Report on Undergraduate Drop Rates. Senior Vice President Martin referred to earlier conversations by both Regents and UW System staff that questioned whether the Drop Report still served a useful purpose. She added that the UW System had twice asked the Legislature to eliminate the reporting requirement, but was turned down in its request.

Regent Loftus brought to the Committee's attention the fact that the UW System is directed by both a Regent resolution and a motion by the Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance to report annually on course drop rates in the UW System. He observed that the two reporting requirements differed, in fact, and he questioned whether or not UW System Administration was fulfilling its dual reporting obligations. The distinction, he noted, was that UW System Administration is required to report to the Board of Regents whenever the *systemwide* rate of dropped credits exceeds five percent. The Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance, in contrast, requires UW System Administration to report annually on *campuses* where undergraduate course drop rates exceed five percent in any given semester.

The report received by the Regents, he continued, presented the course drop rate for the UW System as a whole, which was 3.6 percent for spring semester 2005-06 and fall semester 2006-07. This was well below the five-percent level required by the Board of Regents and by the State Legislature. However, two UW institutions had course drop rates over 5 percent, the UW Colleges and UW-Oshkosh, and the report did not adequately include the steps being taken to reduce the drop rates at institutions over the 5 percent ceiling, which is part of the Legislative reporting requirement. Nor,

he commented, did the Board receive information on what plans the campuses were taking to reduce the rate. Senior Vice President Martin responded that UW-Oshkosh had sent in a detailed explanation regarding its drop rate, and that she would be happy to share it with members of the Education Committee.

The Provosts from UW-Oshkosh and the UW Colleges explained to the Committee why their drop rates were over 5 percent. Regent Davis noted that both of those institutions were participating in the Equity Scorecard Project and that they have been analyzing relevant data to see which students were dropping courses and why. Provost Lane Earns stated that at UW-Oshkosh, the increase in the course drop rate is the result of extending the deadline for dropping courses. UW-Oshkosh, he informed the Committee, believes that its drop policy is beneficial to students because it has had the positive result of a decline in the number of UW-Oshkosh students placed on academic probation. He asked that the Regents continue to challenge the reporting requirement, adding that UW-Oshkosh was working through its drop policy to increase flexibility and reduce costs to students.

Interim Provost Greg Lampe detailed some of the steps the administration at UW Colleges has been taking to reduce the drop rate. These include its First-Year Experience Initiative, as well as careful review and response to the data coming in from the Colleges' participation in the Equity Scorecard. The Equity Scorecard data have led to productive discussions with departments and campuses about particular courses, and these discussions have, in turn, led to action and change. But, he cautioned, the open access mission of the UW Colleges means that a five-percent course drop rate may not be attainable. The UW Colleges, he emphasized, accepted students who would not be able to go anywhere else in the System.

Regent Davis asked Regent Loftus for more clarification about what he felt needed to be done with the Drop Report. He agreed that the report had outlived its usefulness and stated that he was in support of UW-Oshkosh's policy. He reminded the Committee, however, that the audience for the Drop Report is the Legislature. He asked that, in the future, two separate transmittal letters should be written in acknowledgment of the dual reporting requirements: one sent with the report to the Legislature, and one with the report to the Board. The Chancellors of UW Colleges and UW-Oshkosh should also submit letters to the Joint Finance Committee explaining their higher drop rates and how they were addressing them. Finally, he asked that Regent President Bradley also write a letter to Joint Finance, in support of what the two campuses were doing. At that point, he added, the UW System would be in a better position to argue for the elimination of the reporting requirement. Regent Crain agreed that the report in its current condition had become institutionalized, and that the Legislature would not know from reading it that there are positive reasons behind the numbers for Oshkosh and the Colleges. Committee members agreed with these recommendations.

c. The UW System's Study Abroad Vendor Practices

Finally, Senior Vice President Martin reported on UW System institutional affiliations with third-party providers of study abroad programs. As had been the case for student lending practices, she pointed to increased scrutiny, as reported in *The New York Times* and elsewhere, of the relationships between universities and third-party providers of study abroad programs. These are groups or organizations with which many institutions contract out in order to expand study abroad opportunities for their students. The *New York Times* article uncovered certain questionable practices including free and subsidized travel overseas for officials, back-office services to defray operating expenses, stipends to market programs to students, unpaid membership on advisory councils and boards, and even cash bonuses and commissions on student-paid fees. In the wake of this media scrutiny, UW System Administration surveyed its institutions in order to ensure that the affiliations of

UW System schools with third-party study abroad providers were conducted legally, ethically, and in the best interests of students.

Senior Vice President Martin summarized the information yielded by the survey. Five UW institutions do not use third-party providers for study abroad (UW-Green Bay, -La Crosse, - Stout, - Superior, and the Colleges). The remaining UW institutions, she explained, have a variety of “home-grown” study abroad programs, and a few have affiliations with the kinds of third-party providers cited in the *New York Times* article. Limited though they are, such affiliations are made in order to expand study abroad offerings to students. While specific agreements vary, in general UW institutions choose third-party providers because of the in-country logistical and student support services they provide—e.g., housing, orientation, registration assistance, internship placements. Dr. Martin cited other reasons for such agreements, including the safety and security offered to student participants, their assurance of quality programming that allow students to receive credit, and the opportunities to study abroad in less-frequented destinations. UW institutions strive to pass the benefits of these agreements directly to student participants, since the goal of institutional offices of study abroad is to enable as many students as possible to take advantage of such opportunities and to keep them affordable.

In response to a question from Regent Loftus, Senior Vice President Martin assured Committee members that UW System Administration, having learned from past experience, had carefully reviewed what the campuses submitted to ensure ethical practice in the agreements they form with third-party providers. The Provosts were also exercising increased vigilance. She concluded by noting that such media scrutiny had the benefit of increasing the transparency with which UW System institutions operate. Regent Davis expressed her appreciation for the pro-activeness with which System Administration conducted its survey of institutional practice.

Resolutions I.1.c.(1), I.1.c.(2), I.1.c.(3), I.1.c.(4), I.1.c.(5), and I.1.d.(1) were referred as consent agenda items to the full session of the Board of Regents at its Friday, September 7, 2007, meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:22 p.m.