

MINUTES
JOINT MEETING OF THE EDUCATION AND
BUSINESS, FINANCE, AND AUDIT COMMITTEES
BOARD OF REGENTS
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Madison, Wisconsin
August 19, 2010

2009 Annual Report of the Wisconsin Partnership Program

Regent Crain convened the joint meeting of the Education Committee and Business, Finance, and Audit Committee at 1:05 p.m. Regents Crain, Davis, Falbo, Schwalenberg, Smith, Vasquez, Walsh and Wingad were present.

Regent Crain welcomed Dean Robert Golden of the UW School of Medicine and Public Health to present the 2009 Annual Report of the Wisconsin Partnership Fund for a Healthy Future, also known as the Wisconsin Partnership Program. She reminded Committee members that the annual report did not require Regent action.

Dean Golden informed the Regents that the 2009 Report was the Wisconsin Partnership Program's sixth annual report. The past year, he said, had seen the launch of the Program's second Five-Year Plan. It had also seen better returns on its endowment, after the previous year's decline, as well as the installment of better structures to guard against the volatility of financial markets. He reviewed the key accomplishments of the program, including both examples of new grant programs authorized during the year and outcomes of programs concluded in 2009. The Partnership Program had awarded more than \$90 million through a total of 200 initiatives developed and led by faculty, non-profit organizations, and government agencies. These funded programs engaged communities statewide and served to advance the transformation of the UW School of Medicine into a School of Medicine and Public Health. Through the two grant-making committees of the Program, the Oversight and Advisory Committee and the Medical Education and Research Committee, funding had gone to support community-academic partnerships, public health education and training, and education and research programs. The Dean detailed some of the grants made in each of these categories in areas like child and adolescent mental health, community-based obesity reduction, population health, and improved birth outcomes among African-Americans. He also described the leveraging power of the grants, adding that current and concluded grants had successfully competed for \$106.6 million in external funding to either amplify or sustain efforts that originated with Partnership funds. In concluding his remarks on the Annual Report, he described the outcome reports developed for each of the 41 grants completed in 2009, focusing his remarks on two grant programs in particular. He emphasized that the infrastructure of the Program allowed for coordinated and collaborative approaches to addressing public health issues that were systemic and statewide in their impact.

Dean Golden then provided an update on the Wisconsin Partnership Program's responses to the audit performed by the Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB), as requested by the Regents in June when the results were shared with the Board. He reminded the Regents that, over all, the

LAB had found the School of Medicine and Public Health to be in compliance with the Insurance Commissioner's Order establishing the Partnership Program, which was the central focus of the audit. He described the follow-up that had taken place since the Audit report had been issued, with both the Insurance Commissioner and the Wisconsin United for Health Foundation, which oversaw the Program.

Dean Golden then addressed the two issues on which the Board of Regents had requested follow-up: the conflict of interest policies and a question about achieving grant objectives. He emphasized that the LAB had found no instances in which members of the Partnership Program's two grant-making committees had voted on proposals for which they had a conflict. Nonetheless, the LAB recommended language that would make the existing conflict of interest policies even stronger and more specific. Both of these committees, the Oversight and Advisory Committee and the Medical Education and Research Committee, were now engaged in a thorough review of their conflict of interest policies to ensure that what was written matched current practice, and that all levels of conflict, both actual and perceived, were considered. Dean Golden added that the Board of Regents would have a chance to review any revisions to the policies once they were completed and signed-off on by UW-Madison legal counsel and the Program's other oversight bodies.

The Dean then addressed the issue of whether or not the Partnership Program grants were meeting their objectives. He explained to the Regents that the LAB may have created confusion on this issue because of how this question was presented. In short, he asserted, three-quarters of the 40 grant programs reviewed by LAB were meeting their objectives. The LAB's methodology, however, entailed a misunderstanding of the nature of the research process. The LAB treated research grants as if they were contracts, and judged them solely on whether or not their initial objectives were being met. Yet research, the Dean continued, did not necessarily meet outcomes in the way that other grant projects did or result in deliverables in the manner of contracts. The Partnership Program's commitment to responsible oversight, he explained, included the understanding that preliminary findings or the needs of a community partner might lead to modifications in the project's methodology, which might, in turn, have an effect on the achievement of initial objectives. He concluded by expressing the School of Medicine and Public Health's understanding of and appreciation for the responsibility with which it had been entrusted through the Wisconsin Partnership Program to make Wisconsin a healthier state.

In response to comments from Regents Davis and Crain, Dean Golden responded that he was satisfied that the Regents and the Wisconsin United for Health Foundation did understand the nature of research grants and that allayed any lingering concerns he might have about the LAB methodology. In response to questions from Regent Walsh about the leveraging and return on investments taking place throughout the Program, Dr. Golden noted that while the School of Medicine and Public Health did not compare its program to the one at the Medical College of Wisconsin, he believed that his program had real advantages in the multi-disciplinary, collaborative coalition of faculty from his school, engineering, the veterinary school, and elsewhere at UW-Madison working on programming, in particular the work of the Institute for Clinical and Translational Research, which had just received a \$40.6 million award from the National Institutes of Health. UW-Milwaukee Chancellor Santiago thanked Dean Golden for making the argument for collaboration and coalition-building so compellingly, since this was

precisely why UW-Milwaukee—which was a partner to the Medical College of Wisconsin in its translational research grant—wanted to acquire the building next to its engineering school.

Lauding the work of the Wisconsin Partnership Program, Regent Walsh encouraged the Dean, his colleagues, and the Regents to take a moment to appreciate how far this program had come since its inception from the original Blue Cross-Blue Shield gift to the Medical School.

The joint meeting of the Education Committee and Business, Finance, and Audit Committee adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca Karoff
Secretary, Education Committee