

MINUTES
EDUCATION COMMITTEE, BOARD OF REGENTS
UW-Stout, Menomonie, Wisconsin
October 4, 2012

Regent Vásquez convened the meeting of the Education Committee at 3:15 p.m. Regents Vásquez, Bartell, Higgins, Millner, and Tyler were present. Regent Manydeeds joined the meeting in progress.

1. Committee Consent Agenda

Regent Vásquez presented the minutes of the August 23, 2012, meeting of the Education Committee, as well as the following resolutions as consent agenda items:

Resolution I.1.a.(2), approving the reappointments of Greg Nycz, Dr. Philip Farrell, and Dr. Patrick Remington to the UW School of Medicine and Public Health Oversight and Advisory Committee of the Wisconsin Partnership Program for four-year terms beginning November 1, 2012, through October 31, 2016;

Resolution I.1.a.(3), authorizing implementation of the Bachelor of Applied Science at UW-River Falls; and

Resolution I.1.a.(4), authorizing implementation of the Professional Science Master of Industrial and Applied Mathematics at UW-Stout.

Regent Higgins moved, and Regent Bartell seconded the adoption of the consent agenda, which passed unanimously.

2. UW-Stout Presentation: Advancing STEM Education

Regent Vásquez welcomed UW-Stout Interim Provost Mary Hopkins-Best, who presented for the Committee some of the approaches the university was taking to advance STEM—Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math—education. Calling increased STEM education state and national imperatives, she identified STEM reform efforts taking place nationally and in Wisconsin. She then emphasized the overlap of these efforts with UW-Stout’s polytechnic mission. UW-Stout was focusing its STEM educational efforts on three areas: outreach and collaboration, education innovation, and applied research and economic development.

Provost Hopkins-Best highlighted examples in each of the three areas. Through the Western Wisconsin STEM Consortia, UW-Stout was partnering with Western Wisconsin Technical College, nine school districts, and regional businesses to provide professional development in STEM curricula to K-12 educators. The Applied Science Scholar program brought together historically underrepresented students in a living/learning community with strong faculty and peer mentoring. The students in the program received scholarships from the National Science Foundation, completed internships, engaged in paid research experiences. The

program was helping UW-Stout achieve its diversity goals, advance Inclusive Excellence across the campus, and had resulted in an 87% retention rate for students in the living/learning community. She next reported on the Value Added Food Products initiative, a project housed in the UW-Stout Discovery Center, which worked to increase commercialization of Wisconsin-grown organic and natural value-added food products. The project involved collaborative research and development by UW-Stout faculty and graduate students. An Economic Development Administration Award underwrote a share of qualified costs for components of the project advancing to commercialization in rural or distressed Wisconsin communities. Provost Hopkins-Best introduced faculty and students working in each of these programs.

Discussion between Committee members and the students and faculty focused on how early to introduce STEM education to young students, the under-representation of women in STEM disciplines, and how to encourage more participation in STEM fields by those from low-income backgrounds. In response to Regent Bartell's question about women in STEM fields, Kitrina Carlson, Professor of Biology, observed that there were more women in the biological sciences than in math and physics. She cited research showing that bias against women in STEM fields by STEM faculty persisted, even though the numbers of women were increasing. The Applied Science Scholar program, she mentioned, included a focus on identifying and combating bias, and UW-Stout's adherence to the principles of Inclusive Excellence also helped the campus make inroads to reduce bias and help more women be successful in STEM disciplines. In response to a question from Regent Vásquez about children living in extreme poverty, without the benefit of books or parental support at home, Professor Carlson described her own experience and how she found her way to the sciences and the professoriate. She added that, while there was no one-size-fits-all approach to helping every student be successful, both the research and her own experience demonstrated the efficacy of mentoring and of applied work, which helped students feel more engaged in their educations.

At the invitation of Regent Vásquez, two students shared their experiences as participants in the STEM programs highlighted by Provost Hopkins-Best. Regent Vásquez thanked Provost Hopkins-Best, the faculty and the students, adding that the Regents loved such presentations because they learned so much from them.

3. Education Committee Plan for 2012-13

Regent Vásquez reminded Committee members that, at its August meeting, the Committee had identified a set of priorities on which to focus its attention throughout 2012-13. Senior Vice President Nook had promised to return in October to finalize the list and suggest a plan to cover the priorities at its meetings throughout the year. Dr. Nook reviewed the list of priorities, which included: the Flexible Degree Model, Dual Enrollment, Under-represented Student Success, and the Review of Regent Policy. He distributed two handouts, a draft document mapping out the plan and another laying out meeting-by-meeting what Committee members could anticipate in the way of agenda topics and items. He noted that he had added to the priorities named in August the topic of International and Global Education, which had been identified by the Provosts as an emerging topic in need of greater attention by the System.

Regent Millner noted that she would like to see longitudinal data, including time-to-degree and retention rates, as a part of the February 2013 examination of under-represented minority student success. She also asked about the presentation planned for the Regents' November deep-dive policy meeting on the topic of student veterans in the UW System, and suggested some of the issues she would like to see addressed as a part of that presentation. Dr. Nook assured her they would be a part of the November discussion.

Committee members expressed their broad support for moving forward as proposed by Senior Vice President Nook.

4. UW Flexible Degree Model

Regent Vásquez turned to Senior Vice President Nook and UW-Extension Interim Provost Aaron Brower to report on the progress-to-date in the development of the UW Flexible Degree Model. Dr. Nook mentioned the abundance of activity that had already taken place in Provost Brower's first month on the job and as the lead on the development of the UW System's Flexible Degree Model.

Provost Brower then detailed some of that activity, describing the "spirited and constructive" discussions in which he had engaged with many groups, including the Faculty and Academic Staff Reps, the Provosts, members of the System Advisory Group on the Liberal Arts (SAGLA), and faculty and staff at a number of UW campuses. While these discussions were focused on the flexible degree model, he reported, they spoke broadly to the heart of what higher education was all about. UW institutions were especially interested in what students who enrolled in flexible degree programs would actually do, the role of faculty in developing and overseeing the flexible degree, and the role of UW-Extension in supporting the initiative. The initiative was targeting degree-completion programs for non-traditional, adult learners, and the three workforce areas of health care, information technology, and business, although other areas and academic disciplines were encouraged to participate. For all the strong interest he was encountering, he said, there remained the need to explain and define what the flexible model was, in particular the role of faculty in developing program competencies and assessments, a role consistent with their statutory governance control of the curriculum.

Provost Brower outlined the principles undergirding the development of the model, the partnerships critical to making the initiative succeed, and the need for a centralized and coordinated infrastructure. He referenced the timeline and approval processes that would need to be followed, including faculty governance and accreditation, adding that, while there were several other competency-based programs in existence already, they constituted new territory for accreditors. A deadline of November 1 had been established for those departments or programs interested in committing to plan, and they would be part of the first cohort targeting the Fall 2013 implementation date. He outlined what the Regents, students, and the state could anticipate over the course of the coming academic year, with the goal of having one-two academic degree

programs and/or certificate programs available to students in Fall 2013, along with a handful of individual courses. He also emphasized the extensive infrastructure that was needed in order to offer flexible degree and certificate programs, estimated at a cost of \$12 million. While the budget was still under construction, this figure included support for faculty and institutions developing flexible programs, a large number of advisers to ensure student success, and a student information system. Both a faculty and an administrative oversight group were being convened to advise the development of the model.

Discussion focused on: how the flexible degree would be different from the kinds of online courses and degree programs currently offered throughout the System; the market research underway to determine the target audience of students; and the challenges of designing valid assessments to provide evidence that students were mastering the competencies that would be at the heart of flexible degrees. Regent Bartell asked whether faculty members would feel irrelevant if there were no longer students in front of them to teach under the flexible model. Provost Brower explained a different role for faculty, in which they would mentor students through mastery of a program's competencies and assessments. He observed the "catch 22" situation for UW faculty, many of whom wanted to be innovative and involved early, and yet were uncertain about committing to a program that had yet to be developed or proven. In response to a question from Regent Millner, Provost Brower elaborated on the differences between traditional UW degree programs—both in classroom and online settings—and programs offered in the flexible format. He emphasized again the opportunities for student-faculty engagement and interaction in the new model.

In response to questions from Regent Vásquez, Provost Brower described the market research that would be done to identify and understand the potential student populations for the program, and the professional development and support that would be available to faculty and staff interested in developing and working with programs under the flexible model. He mentioned the "high-touch," intrusive advising that would be needed to help students be successful. In response to a question from Regent Tyler, he referred to the UW System's shared learning goals that would serve as a foundation for the development of competencies and the assessments needed to provide appropriate evidence for student learning and mastery. Some competencies, he added, would be easy to assess; some would be more difficult and there would certainly be some challenges in scaling up the more-difficult-to-assess competencies for larger numbers of students.

In response to a question from Regent Bartell, Provost Brower and Senior Vice President Nook described the hundreds of thousands of Wisconsin residents who had some college but no degrees. While not all these people would necessarily have an interest in pursuing degrees in the flexible model, the number was significant and indicated unmet need and an untapped market. In response to another question from Regent Bartell, Provost Brower anticipated where he hoped to be in five years: a total of 20 Flex programs up and running, serving 3,000-5,000 students. Acknowledging the significant investment needed to make the program operational and viable, he expressed his hope that the model would begin generating revenue by then as well. In response to a

question from Regent Tyler, he replied that he was neither worried that the assessments would not be rigorous enough, nor that they would be too difficult and students would fail them. The real challenge, he concluded, would be in designing valid assessments to measure what we valued, and then scale those to accommodate large numbers of students.

In thanking Provost Brower for his presentation, Committee members expressed their high expectations, deep interest, and strong support for the Flexible Degree Model. Regent Bartell asked Provost Brower to convey to System faculty the intense interest on the part of the Regents, to which Provost Brower replied, “they know!”

5. Report of the Senior Vice President

a. Academic & Student Affairs 2011-12 Year in Review

Senior Vice President Nook referred Committee members to the executive summary in the Regent materials which reviewed some of the major changes and accomplishments in the Academic Affairs arena. These were set in motion by—and responses to—the President’s Advisory Committee on the Roles of UW System Administration.

b. Academic and Student Affairs Updates

Senior Vice President Nook reported on two staff reassignments in his office related to the work of the Education Committee: Committee secretary Rebecca Karoff had accepted a reassignment to work with Aaron Brower on the development of the Flexible Degree; and Carmen Faymonville had agreed to fill Rebecca’s staff liaison role. As an Academic Planner in the Office of Academic, Faculty and Global Programs, Carmen had ample experience bringing new academic programs to the Regents and was well poised to take on the Education Committee staffing. Dr. Nook and Committee members expressed their appreciation to Rebecca for her service over the years to the Regents.

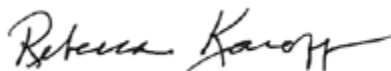
Full Board Consent Agenda

Resolutions I.1.a.(2), I.1.a.(3), and I.1.a.(4) were referred to the consent agenda of the full Board of Regents at its Friday, October 5, 2012, meeting.

Prior to adjourning, Regent Vásquez commented that he felt the new format for bringing new academic programs the Regents worked well.

The meeting adjourned at 4:32 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Rebecca Karoff
Secretary, Education Committee