

11/21/2013

BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM

Room 1820 Van Hise Hall, 1220 Linden Drive, Madison, Wisconsin 53706

December 6, 2013

II.

8:45 a.m. Annual Board of Regents Photo – Room 1920

9:00 a.m. All Regents – Room 1820

1. Calling of the roll
2. Approval of the minutes of October 10-11, 2013 meeting
3. Report of the President of the Board
 - a. Hospital Authority Board, Higher Educational Aids Board, and Wisconsin Technical College System Board reports
 - b. Additional items that the President may report to the Board
4. Report of the President of the System
 - a. Update on recent events
 - b. Other news from around the UW System
5. Update on Flex Option
6. Report and approval of actions taken by the Business and Finance Committee
7. Report and approval of actions taken by the Capital Planning and Budget Committee
8. Report and approval of actions taken by the Education Committee
9. Report and approval of actions taken by the Research, Economic Development, and Innovation Committee
10. Report and approval of actions taken by the Audit Committee
11. Resolution of Appreciation for UW System President Kevin Reilly's Service to the University of Wisconsin System
12. Farewell remarks from President Reilly
13. Regent communications, petitions, and memorials

UPDATE ON THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN FLEXIBLE OPTION

BACKGROUND

In the eighteen months since the UW System and Governor Walker announced the UW Flexible Option, much has been accomplished to fulfill the assignment that the first cohort of programs be available to students in Fall 2013. Admissions were opened on November 18 and the first students will enroll in January 2014.

Since its announcement, the UW Flexible Option has garnered considerable attention, throughout Wisconsin and across the country and the UW System is being watched closely. The UW Flexible Option presents a new way to progress towards a UW degree, dramatically different from traditional campus- or course-based instruction, whether delivered face-to-face or using online formats. Both the curricular and delivery models are distinctive, involving new kinds of partnerships between UW-Extension and UW institutions. UW Flex programs are offered through formats that are self-paced, competency-based, and designed to serve an adult, non-traditional student population whose needs for post-secondary education are not being met. The competency-based UW Flex model emphasizes mastery of demonstrated student learning outcomes. Students in the Flex Option use the knowledge they have acquired through prior course-work, military and on-the-job training, and other learning experiences, and take assessments to demonstrate their mastery over academic content wherever and whenever they are ready. UW Flex programs are being designed to meet areas of strong student demand, economic growth, and workforce development needs.

Signaling their strong interest in the program, members of the Board of Regents have conducted a number of discussions on the UW Flexible Option since its announcement in June 2012, including an extensive report at the April 2013 meeting and the approval of the tuition pricing and subscription model in July 2013. At its December 6, 2013, meeting, the Board of Regents will hear a status report on the development of the Flexible Option.

REQUESTED ACTION

For discussion only; no action is required.

DISCUSSION

UW-Extension Chancellor Ray Cross and Interim Provost Aaron Brower will report to the Regents on the major developments in the construction and launching of the UW Flexible Option, including:

- The collaborative model led by UW-Extension with cohort 1 partners at UW-Milwaukee and the UW Colleges;
- Academic development of Flex curricula by UW-Milwaukee and UW Colleges faculty and staff;
- The administrative and operational functions that will enable students to apply and be admitted, receive financial aid, pay their fees, and register, among other functions;

- The hiring and training of the first Academic Success Coaches, who will provide the proactive, wrap-around advising, tutoring and mentoring that is a signature component of UW Flex and vital to ensuring student success;
- The auxiliary services that will be available to Flex students, such as library services, disability services, writing and tech support;
- The launching on November 11 of the “Flex Fit” pre-assessment tool, designed to determine whether the UW Flexible Option is an appropriate educational program for students;
- The opening of admissions on November 18, including updated numbers of how many applicants have applied and to which programs;
- The status of the RFP process for the Flex student information and customer relations management systems;
- An announcement of the second cohort of UW Flexible Option programs;
- Ongoing national attention and exposure of the initiative; and
- An overview of some of the program features that can be worked through only once students have enrolled.

RELATED REGENT AND UW SYSTEM POLICIES

None.