

8/13/2014

BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM
UW-Oshkosh, Alumni Welcome and Conference Center,
625 Pearl Avenue, Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54901
August 22, 2014

II.

9:00 a.m. All Regents – Sodexo Grand Ballroom AB

1. Calling of the roll
2. Approval of the minutes of the June 5-6, 2014 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. Status update – chancellor searches
 - c. Update on visits with Congressional delegation
 - d. Additional items that the President may report to the Board
4. Report of the President of the System
 - a. Update on remedial education, including focus on UW-Parkside, UW-La Crosse and UW-Milwaukee/UW Colleges
 - b. Access to success for Native Americans
 - c. Other updates
 - d. News from around the UW System
 - e. Student spotlight
5. Report and approval of actions taken by the Business and Finance Committee
6. Report and approval of actions taken by the Audit 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. Presentation: “Looking Back, Looking Forward: Taking Stock of the UW System’s Progress on Diversity”
[if not addressed on Thursday, August 21, 2014]
11. Presentation: Update on the University of Wisconsin Flexible Option

12. Resolution of Appreciation for UW-Oshkosh Chancellor Richard Wells' service to the UW System
13. Resolution of Appreciation to UW-Oshkosh as host of the August meeting
14. Regent communications, petitions, and memorials

Thursday's closed session agenda item may be considered during any recess in the regular meeting agenda on either Thursday or Friday.

UPDATE ON THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN FLEXIBLE OPTION

BACKGROUND

Following the announcement of the UW Flexible Option in June 2012, the UW System became the first public university in the country to develop a competency-based program at the system level, awarding degrees and certificates from UW institutions. The UW Flexible Option has garnered considerable statewide and national attention and the UW System is recognized as a national leader in competency-based education. The UW Flexible Option builds on the System's reputation for quality and innovation; its foundation in the *Wisconsin Idea*; and its ongoing commitment to provide affordable, accessible, high-quality education to more Wisconsin residents.

Presenting a new way to progress towards a UW degree, UW Flexible Option dramatically differs 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. The programs are offered through formats that are self-paced, competency-based, and designed to serve a large adult, non-traditional student population whose needs for post-secondary education are not being met. The competency-based model emphasizes mastery of demonstrated student learning outcomes. Instead of creating specific classes for Flex Option students, faculty from the different campuses have identified specific competencies, or skills and knowledge, which together are necessary for a UW degree. Students in the UW Flexible Option use the knowledge they have acquired through prior course-work, military and on-the-job training, and other learning experiences to take assessments that demonstrate their mastery over academic content wherever and whenever they are ready. The programs are designed to meet areas of strong student demand, economic growth, and workforce development needs.

The UW Flexible Option opened for applications on November 18, 2013 and the first cohort of students began their academic work on January 2, 2014 through programs at UW Colleges and UW-Milwaukee. UW-Extension is providing key administrative leadership and support. After seven months of operation, enrollments are a bit ahead of projections and continue to grow. Interest in UW Flex programs remains strong.

Signaling their strong interest in the program, the Board of Regents has conducted a number of discussions on the UW Flexible Option since its announcement, including an extensive report at the April 2013 meeting, the approval of the tuition pricing and subscription model in July 2013, and a status report on development at the December 6, 2013 meeting. At its August 22, 2014, meeting, the Board will hear an update on major milestones and ongoing developments.

REQUESTED ACTION

For discussion only; no action is required.

DISCUSSION

UW Colleges & UW-Extension Interim Chancellor Aaron Brower and UW-Extension Continuing Education, Outreach and E-Learning Dean David Schejbal will report to the Regents on major accomplishments relating to the UW Flexible Option, with a focus on the student experience, ongoing challenges and emerging opportunities, and how the job market informs program development. They will also update the Regents on how the UW System has been working closely with the U.S. Department of Education in order to provide federal financial aid to students enrolling in Flexible Option programs, as well as to develop alternative pathways to awarding federal financial aid through competency-based educational programs.

RELATED REGENT AND UW SYSTEM POLICIES

None.