

MINUTES
EDUCATION COMMITTEE, BOARD OF REGENTS

June 5, 2014

Committee Actions

Regent Bradley convened the meeting of the Education Committee at 10:15 a.m. Regents Evers, Manydeeds, Petersen, and Vasquez were present.

Committee Consent Agenda

Regent Bradley presented the minutes of the April 10, 2014, meeting, along with the following resolutions as consent agenda items:

Resolution I.1.a.(2), approving an adjusted request in the amount of \$7,853,718 to the Trustees of the William F. Vilas Trust Estate for UW-Madison;

Resolution I.1.a.(3), approving the Vilas Trust proffer for UW-Milwaukee in the amount of \$120,769; and

Resolution I.1.a.(4), approving promotions, tenure designations, and related academic items.

The consent agenda, moved by Regent Petersen and seconded by Regent Manydeeds, passed unanimously.

Full Agenda

The Education Committee unanimously approved Resolution I.1.b., UW-Platteville's revision to its mission, presented in a second reading. Regent Evers moved and Regent Manydeeds seconded the motion.

Resolution I.1.c., an addendum to the UW-La Crosse mission, last revised in 2010, moved by Regent Evers and seconded by Regent Manydeeds, also passed without any discussion.

Regent Bradley asked Senior Vice President Mark Nook to introduce Resolution I.1.d., the 30-credit Universal Transfer Agreement. Nook stated that the agreement was the result of conversations with the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) and thanked Provost and Vice President for Student Success, Kathy Cullen, for her collaboration. Further, he thanked UW Colleges Provost Greg Lampe and Office of Academic, Faculty, and Global Affairs staff member Diane Treis-Rusk for their leadership in coordinating a task force of UW System constituents. The task force devised the final course equivalencies and curricular crosswalks as presented in the agreement. A special mention was given to former Senior Special Assistant (and former UW-Parkside Provost), Terry Brown, for being instrumental to the project's success. Nook explained that the courses that make up the 30 (and more) credits that are transferable for each student -- whether he or she transfers from a UW System or a WTCS institution -- will work for most students although in some selected majors, additional courses may be required for

graduation. If students plan to study, for example, engineering, they need to make wise course choices early on in their college career, appropriate to the rigor of an engineering major.

Nook commented that UW System staff will quickly move forward with developing good advising rubrics to be used at all UW institutions and work with transfer institutions to ease students' transition from one institution to another.

During the comments and questions that ensued, Regent Evers thanked Provost Lampe and other members of the task force who worked on the agreement in a fairly short time frame. He acknowledged that the agreement presented a huge step forward and added that seamlessness was a virtue and was an important step towards consumer protection for all students who are entering either of the Wisconsin public higher education systems. It gives students the requisite knowledge and peace of mind that what they are doing in high school means something.

Regent Vasquez as well complimented the two systems for achieving this goal, particularly since he was cognizant of its importance through his work on the Board of the WTCS. He emphasized that the legislation responded to a real need, and advocated to push further work on easing transfer. Whereas some minor changes may be needed in the language, he asked, "Why not make it simpler, do a five-year agreement, even if every year some minor tweaking might have to be made? To some, the current 1-year contract might imply that we won't renew it each year. It should be more lasting."

Nook responded that renewal each year would make sense as course offerings at institutions tend to change and may need to be adjusted every year. The good news was that as additional courses would be included, larger numbers of transferable credits would become available. At this point in the meeting, Regent Delgado joined the Committee.

Regent Vasquez responded that he wanted to make sure "that we are clearly going in a new direction; not going back. The legislature made it clear that the transfer is mandatory and that it cannot be cancelled. The idea was not to cancel it at any future point or to try it just for a year, as there is no possibility of opting out."

Nook clarified that the concept of 30-credit universal transfer was definitely not up for negotiation but that due to the nature of higher education practices, individual courses would be up for consideration. Regent Petersen, emphasizing his role as WTCS Board President, pronounced the agreement as fundamentally good for all students and highlighted that affordability was the main issue along with the necessity to provide students help and guidance throughout their education. In fact, transferability, said Petersen, was "paramount to its success." The 30-credit universal transfer agreement," Petersen expressed, "would lay the foundation. Financial aid issues might also be more resolvable for students now."

Nook acknowledged that there were challenges in the past despite the hundreds of articulation agreements between technical, community, and UW System institutions, and said that he was grateful for the input received from the Regents. Years of collaboration, informed Nook, had built a level of trust to get to a systematic cooperation among Wisconsin's institutions. While there might be lots of challenges to overcome in the implementation of the agreement, it also presents the institutions with a good deal of freedom for customization,

explained Nook. Resolution I.1.d. was moved by Regent Petersen and seconded by Regent Vasquez, and carried unanimously.

Resolution I.1.e., the revision of RPD 7-1, made necessary by the universal 30-credit transfer agreement, was moved by Regent Evers and second by Regent Vasquez, and carried unanimously without discussion.

In the host campus presentation, Provost Johannes Britz and Interim Vice Provost for Research Mark Harris gave an overview of their campus planning processes used to sustain and broaden UW-Milwaukee's research agenda. The presentation focused on the work completed by UW-Milwaukee's Top-Tier Research University Thematic Team. Results of the team's actions included guidelines and goals for strengthening and assessing research excellence as a critical component of the university's strategic plan. Research excellence at UW-Milwaukee, explained Britz, would intersect with community engagement and student success in an innovative environment. He thanked the Dean of the School for Freshwater Studies, David Garman, and Vice Provost Harris for their co-leadership in bringing the program array in alignment with student success and research productivity. Regent Bradley congratulated UW-Milwaukee on its success in completing the strategic planning process.

Turning to the report from Senior Vice President Nook, Regent Bradley expressed his congratulations for Nook's appointment as Chancellor to Montana State University Billings.

First, Nook updated the Committee on the Course Options Program, a dual/concurrent enrollment program now specified in Wisconsin Statute 118.52. The way the statute is written, explained Nook, it essentially laid the financial responsibility for high school students taking college courses at K-12 school districts.

Historically, American college students generally paid for college courses they took in high school; however, this practice created inequities as financially challenged families and underserved students had fewer options. When it became apparent that school districts did not have the means to pay for concurrent enrollment courses, President Cross and Nook engaged with DPI as well as legislative offices, to make the Course Options Program work.

In May, 2014, President Cross announced a stop-gap solution, namely to use some of the UW System reserves to pay for operating costs of various existing dual/concurrent programs within the UW System. Nook asserted that the state would need to adjust how dual/concurrent enrollment programs would be funded in a sustainable way, as the operating cost could not be shouldered from diminishing UW System reserves. Based on current estimates, the cost to the UW System would be in excess of \$2 million this coming academic year (exact costs were not known at this point). Nook recommended the creation of a dual/concurrent enrollment program that "would be more available to a broader array of students and at the same time financially responsible, as there is extreme value to these courses not only to students but also the state."

Regent Vasquez inquired whether or not there was an understanding of what the incentive for the school district was, if they had to pay. He shared his concern that the Course Options Program may present an unfunded mandate, with undue burden falling on WTCS and the UW System to make it work. He asked, "Is there instead an incentive for school districts to

hold out until the legislature comes back and orders the UW System to pay for it long term, as they now enjoy a release from financial responsibility?”

Regent Evers thanked Nook and President Cross for their efforts and explained that from his perspective, there are actual costs that the high schools will shoulder, such as paying for facilities, utilities, and teachers. He elaborated that WTCS dual/concurrent enrollment programs appear cost-neutral and that at the technical institutions the cost of providing college-level courses is being absorbed. Regent Evers elaborated that he was glad to have more conversations on the issue and to remember that districts have infrastructure costs.

Regent Vasquez reiterated that he was concerned about suggested solutions in which the UW System would still have to pick up the costs. He recommended a solution in which districts would have “skin in the game,” and added that “there was a present danger that there would be a permanent expectation that the UW System would pick up the costs.”

Nook replied that he had some genuine concerns about moving forward with any type of permanent cost absorption by the UW System. At present, he described, there was a growth of existing dual/concurrent enrollment programs, such as the one housed at UW-Oshkosh, by 25%, a very significant increase that developed quickly after the announcement of the stop-gap financing. Indeed, it was important to find appropriate ways to fund dual and concurrent enrollment because typically the family pays for college courses, and all current students enrolled at UW institutions as college students paid for their education. “There is still plenty to work out,” observed Nook. “Currently there are 4-5 ideas on the table that are discussed for viability.” However, there was a consensus “not to use tuition money from students enrolled at our campuses to pay for the student population eligible to gain from the Course Options Program. “As an institution of higher education,” Nook explained further, “we are serving college students, and at least a portion of the cost is covered by the family.”

UW-Oshkosh Chancellor Wells contributed the information that UW-Oshkosh has long been providing dual enrollment and warned that the general public is “confused about what’s covered and what’s not.” Given the number of students served through these programs, UW-Oshkosh would want to expand these programs but “we need to be able to afford it,” Wells indicated. “Beyond our ability to pay for over \$2 million in the short term, real costs are occurring to offer these programs. Generally, people understand that universities in the UW System have never been funded to cover these enrollment programs, but parents paid for them.” Wells further advised that “we need to pin down who is responsible to cover this program beyond this year.”

Nook invited Phyllis King, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at UW-Milwaukee, to present some background on the systemwide Remediation Working Group. No action would be taken until Nook and UWSA leadership would evaluate the report and select priorities from among the recommendations made by the group, consisting of faculty, academic staff, and remedial/developmental education experts. King, together with UW-Parkside Associate Provost Dennis Rome and UW-Stevens Point Professor of English Mark Ballhorn, co-chaired the group and finished their work in early May. Chancellors and Provosts received the working group report for initial consideration, but did not yet prioritize any action steps. This work would follow in the next academic year and beyond. The group reviewed with due diligence Regent, UW System, and UW institutional policy on remedial/developmental

education and presented ideas for implementation on the part of the institutions, UWSA, and for consideration by the Board.

King reported that one of the primary tasks that would lie ahead was to find a common and workable definition of college readiness and attention to best practices in the field. The working group also recommended a structured oversight for remedial/developmental education and alignment for student success by establishing accuracy of student testing, moving students more quickly from remedial courses to regular, credit-bearing college courses, and individualized strategies for different groups of students at different developmental stages. The group also strongly recommended systemwide coordination to create changes and able to assess and track progress, and to secure funding for professional development and training. A coordination unit, whether a council or a group of executives or another body, was needed so that all campuses could adopt the same definition of college readiness and offer college-level/credit-bearing courses based on shared definitions.

The group further recommended that all institutions should use systemwide placement testing (even those that currently do not) and develop a common algorithm for cut-off scores and admission to credit-bearing courses. Additionally, institutions would have to make sure that the students' first 30 credits would be offered regularly so that a student could complete required courses in a timely manner.

Regent Vasquez commented that one priority was to arrive at an early identification of students who may need remediation and to assess the success of the current programs and measures. "At the end of the day," declared Vasquez, "the only thing that counts is whether the student earns a college degree or not." "Tracking whether or not they are actually graduating was paramount." He also added that "Pertaining to first generation and students of color, there needed to be more focus on understanding why members of this group of students drop out and do not come back." Regent Vasquez further indicated that "without ensuring students' graduation from college, there would be hours and hours spent, and students would end up having wasted their time and our time." "In particular, stated Vasquez, he would like to see academic bridge programs and early placement programs to help students through remedial education. King explained that UW-Milwaukee, for instance, already tracked persistence, retention, and graduation rates, and already implemented changes, just like a majority of the of the UW institutions have done under expert faculty leadership.

Nook elaborated that student progress would be relatively easy to follow as UW System Administration had been gathering standard data on remediation every three years and System leadership followed what was happening nationally. According to Nook, "Math is the biggest challenge as it is not just the young, but adult students returning to college who find math difficult but need to be prepared adequately to study quantitative thinking."

Regent Vasquez then inquired about definitions of college readiness at different levels of the educational system. He asked, "How much have we assessed inter-alignment with the secondary system, particularly to communicate what the UW System defines as college readiness?" King responded that discussions about college readiness took place with the DPI representative to the working group, Sara Baird. The working group's charge was to sort out internal UW System issues before entering the conversation with K-16 partners planned for later in the year.

Regent Petersen commented that his interest lay in modernizing remedial education and to define better what “we need to pay attention to in terms of a compliance perspective.” Acknowledging that remedial education at any level presented challenges, nevertheless developmental education generally made sense even though there existed certainly reservations that would need to be addressed.” He added that it looked to him “like we have a better sense of what we need to measure, and what are the trends, and tactics that we are going to use to improve the knowledge of the incoming students.” His interest was to contribute actively to what the Regents could be and would be doing, for instance, in modernizing policies, and focusing on newly admitted students, making sure they are prepared. The report of the working group, he indicated, would set up a framework, but it was still somewhat unclear “how are we going to do this.”

King responded that she thought that the proposed council was key to swift implementation of actions. While some of the recommendations needed to be implemented as soon as possible, a realistic plan was to start with some parts and to continue over a longer period lasting about five years. Some statewide summits and action plans generated by constituents would work in offering such opportunities for implementation. The council would stand ready to convene in August, start work in September 2014, and present a spring summit, which would help spin off regional conversations about developmental education, so that everyone could be brought on board.

Regent Evers praised the work of the group and pointed out that many of the findings coincided with work being done at DPI as well, as DPI also sought to decrease the need for remediation of high school graduates as they enter college. Analysis at DPI pointed to the need for differential math requirements, an area that higher education and K-16 communities still needed to talk about more. While he acknowledged a need for standardization, Evers advocated for different math requirements for students choosing different areas of study. For someone going into social studies or the humanities, he commented, the math requirements should be adjusted, and different pathways should be made available. In response, King confirmed that the working group had indeed examined this issue and recommended a pathways approach. The design of the new developmental program at UWM, for instance, was focused, detailed King, around degree requirements that incorporated what levels of math are actually needed for individual majors.

Nook then shared that most UW institutions already have different math pathways. First college-level, credit-bearing math courses generally differ for students declaring an interest in elementary education as opposed to engineering, and so forth.

Evers confirmed that the DPI data show agreement on most questions between the UW institutions, K-12, and the technical colleges. He was hopeful that the council would move swiftly from policy to practice. From his vantage point as Superintendent of DPI, it was important to learn from higher education which students are remediated. He emphasized the need to have feedback loop back to high schools and to analyze the experiences that led to remediation to occur before students enroll in college.

Nook agreed that the use of a more standard algorithm for placements, as recommended by the group, was one way forward. He continued by saying that one of the difficulties about reporting back to individual schools or school districts was that different cut-off scores were

being used at UW institutions leading to different conclusions about students' developmental needs, depending on the UW institutions and their select missions. These different cut-off scores often did not make sense to the public, and UW institutions would work on a common algorithm that would help the UW System to work with particular high schools.

For now, explained Nook, "we can report back what the English and math placement scores and ACT scores are when students arrive at our institutions. From there everyone can see what levels of work are needed to test into credit-bearing courses and relate that back to the high school G.P.A. Scores, however, are used differently at each campus. Even in the future, Nook surmised, the algorithm or any other formula might not end up absolutely identical for all institutions; however, the UW System could indeed give some baseline information, so that high schools could adapt their learning outcomes."

Nook thanked Jim Wollack, who oversees the systemwide testing center housed at UW-Madison, as well as UWSA staff, Laura Anderson, and an initial investigative work group at UWSA that got the objectives for remediation reform rolling, led by Terry Brown, and supported by Academic and Student Affairs staff, Jin Cheng, Diane Treis-Rusk, Gail Bergman, and others. Nook again thanked the co-chairs for completing such a big piece of work in a short time. Nook vouched that the Office of Academic and Student Affairs' next step would be to prioritize that list of actions recommended by the working group and to swiftly move action plans forward with provosts and chancellors. Provosts' and others' input was needed, he stated, to determine which changes would come first so that an immediate impact could be achieved for the students the System was serving right now. "It cannot wait," concluded Nook.

Regent Bradley thanked King for her summary and elucidation of the report. UW-Oshkosh Provost Lane Earns addressed Regent Evers' request for feedback, confirming that it would be helpful to issue data about students' performance at college. Earns said that information from DPI and the school districts was needed at the front end, e.g., to determine which courses individual students had taken and what knowledge they needed to acquire to succeed at different colleges and universities. Earns added that the universities do not always have that information on all students and that it was somewhat hard to predict which students needed remediation. He was confident, however, that higher education could help provide some early notice and address particular students' needs even before formal testing took place.

Updating the Committee on the engineering study being conducted by an external research firm in response to some requests for approval for new engineering degree programs from institutions that have traditionally not had engineering programs, Nook noted that the organization was almost done with tracking data. Its report would be ready in August, so that by fall UWSA could decide on a recommendation for the future of engineering education for the state. Until the study was fully analyzed and vetted, there would be no new approvals for new program proposals.

Nook then closed his report by talking briefly about the Department of Education's *Dear Colleague Letter*, which provided guidance for how institutions of higher education should handle cases of sexual harassment and sexual assault occurring on their campuses. All UW institutions have policies around this issue, affirmed Nook, but apart from various Human Resources, faculty, academic, and classified staff policies, there were also administrative codes that likely had to be changed, particularly Chapters UWS 4, 7, 11, and 17, so that UW System

practices could be aligned with the guidance of the federal government. Possible changes to Chapter 17, he indicated, were primarily oriented towards students' complaints, but also contained sections that concerned faculty. Personnel codes affecting faculty and academic staff would also be considered by UW System Administration, shared governance, and the Regents for needed changes. Legal counsel, in collaboration with the President and the Office of Academic and Student Affairs, would put together the scope statements for approval by the Attorney General and the Governor. These changes would then be vetted with UW constituents, and would be taken for approval to the Regents probably at the August Board meeting. The process of changing administrative code would take about a year. General Counsel Tom Stafford will talk to the Committee about the rulemaking process and explain the background in August.

Finally, Nook thanked the Education Committee, which he had the privilege to attend since 2007. He expressed great appreciation for the level provosts are involved in Education Committee proceedings, and that they are regularly invited to the table, standing ready to assist the Committee. A lot of the preparation for Committee meetings happens behind the scenes, reported Nook. For instance, before any resolution is considered by the Committee, a lot of work has gone into making sure that meetings can run effectively. He thanked Carmen Faymonville and Rebecca Karoff, as well as the Associate Vice Presidents serving the Office of Academic and Student Affairs, Vicki Washington, Heather Kim, and Stephen Kolison. Nook also reserved a special thank you for the chancellors and their work on behalf of the UW System.

In the name of the Committee, Regent Bradley acknowledged that compared to the life of a senior vice president, the life of an Education Committee chair "was quite easy." Indicating that Nook's service was informed by hard work and thoughtfulness, Regent Bradley expressed confidence that students in Montana would greatly profit from Nook's leadership and service. Regent Manydeeds also thanked Nook for his organized, principled contributions of the UW System and UW System Administration.

Moved by Regent Vasquez and seconded by Regent Manydeeds, the meeting adjourned at 11:39 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by,



Dr. Carmen Faymonville
Secretary of the Education Committee