

CHARTING A NEW COURSE FOR THE UW SYSTEM
WORKING GROUP ON RE-DEFINING EDUCATIONAL QUALITY

Minutes of the Meeting

September 4, 2003
10:00 a.m.
Pyle Center, Room 225
Madison, Wisconsin

Present: Regent Fred Mohs, Chair; Regent Elizabeth Burmaster, Regent Beth Richlen, Chancellor Rick Wells, Chancellor Julius Erlenbach, Interim Chancellor Virginia Helm, Senior Vice President Cora Marrett, Provost Peter Spear, Provost John Wanat, Kris McGrew, UW-Extension; Greg Wypiszynski, UW-Oshkosh; Kory Kozloski, UW-Milwaukee student; Associate Vice President Ron Singer

Unable to attend: Regent Emeritus Pat Boyle and Cliff Abott, UW-Green Bay

In opening remarks, Regent Mohs noted the group's focus on quality and how to maintain it in the face of reduced resources. Indicators of quality are needed that will facilitate communication with both internal and external audiences.

A revised draft statement of goals (attached) was circulated, listing the following goals:

- 1) Serve the state
- 2) Student success
- 3) Performance indicators to monitor quality

Regent Mohs asked for comments on the draft statement.

With regard to performance indicators, Chancellor Erlenbach suggested looking at the indicators included in the annual accountability report, and it was agreed that these would be brought to the next meeting. Provost Spear suggested that indicators include both long and short-term impacts, and Regent Burmaster expressed concern that any indicators identified not be viewed as the only measures of quality.

Recognizing that students are diverse, Chancellor Wells suggested focusing on value-added indicators.

Regent Mohs commented on the value of stories in showing the importance of strong departments and how that quality can be affected by reduced resources.

Provost Spear suggested that quality in research, creative work, and scholarship be added to the list of goals, and there was agreement with that suggestion.

In discussion about the expected outcome of the study, members commented that it is both a strategic plan and a response to the recent budget cuts. Regent Mohs expressed the need for an outcome that would resonate with the general public and with key decision makers.

In response to questions about the broader context for the study, Dr. Marrett noted that the environment included both the recent budget cuts and the state's economy and demographics. Speakers will address some of these broader issues at future meetings.

With regard to how consideration of state service and research would mesh with what is being done in other working groups, it was indicated that staff and working group chairs, along with the Steering Committee, could address these matters as needed to avoid duplication of effort.

Chancellor Wells suggested that it would be beneficial to focus on the faculty/student relationship in describing quality. Mr. Kozloski added that quality is important both in the classroom and in other student activities.

Regent Mohs suggested that the message should focus on what students need, and Dr. Marrett noted that it also is the mission of higher education to advance knowledge to serve society in the long term.

Interim Chancellor Helm suggested identifying components of quality and then considering how to enhance them.

Chancellor Wells suggested using the conceptual framework of the National Survey of Student Engagement in describing quality. There was agreement that this would be a good place to start, with the understanding that the survey deals with perceptions, rather than actual outcomes, and does not cover the areas of service and research.

With regard to impacts of recent budget cuts on quality, it was noted that campuses did their best to protect core educational services and that some impacts would be long-term. Dr. Marrett advised that leading indicators can show the development of trends affecting quality.

Regent Mohs observed that the relationship between tuition increases and time-to-graduation for students may be an important indicator, and Regent Burmaster suggested that United Council might wish to survey students on that topic.

In response to questions about the breadth of the working group's charge, Regent Gottschalk indicated that, while quality is important both in research and state service, these areas will be addressed by other groups and that the Steering Committee will coordinate among working groups.

At Regent Burmaster's suggestion, it was agreed that one of the group's goals would be titled "Student Success – Teaching and Learning" and that this would encompass the faculty/student relationship.

Regent Mohs asked that others be invited to contribute to the discussion of quality. It was agreed that information about the study should be disseminated broadly on campuses and to the public. It also was suggested that the Website for the study include an area in which people could offer their comments and ideas.

With regard to future meetings, Dr. Marrett indicated that staff would develop a proposed agenda and timeline and develop materials responsive to the group's discussion.

The discussion concluded, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.