

WORKING GROUP ON RE-DEFINING EDUCATIONAL QUALITY

Minutes of the Meeting

December 4, 2003

10:45 a.m.

The Lowell Center, Room 118

Madison, Wisconsin

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

Unable to attend: Kory Kozloski, UW-Milwaukee student; Cliff Abbott, UW-Green Bay

Maury Cotter, Director of the UW-Madison Office of Quality Improvement, attended the meeting as a consultant to the working group.

The minutes of the November 6th meeting stood approved as distributed.

Impact of Budget Cuts

Regent Mohs began the meeting by distributing written comments received from faculty on the impact on students of the reductions being made on campus due to the UW's \$150 million budget cut. Problems ranged from inability to fill positions due to salaries that do not meet market competition, to concerns about maintaining program accreditation, to insufficient funds to copy materials for the classroom. He wanted the Regents to send a strong message to the campuses that these kinds of problems need to be resolved, even though that means making difficult choices, such as eliminating a major or other program.

Chancellor Erlenbach noted that these are the kinds of measures being taken across the system, and Regent Mohs indicated that it will be necessary to inform state decision makers that the university has done its part to deal with the budget shortfall and that resources are needed in order to maintain access.

Educational Quality Vision Statement, Chart, and Process Model

A revised educational quality vision statement and process model were distributed to the working group, along with a chart showing educational quality objectives of access, student engagement, and value-added student outcomes, along with aims, indicators, and measurement responsibility for each objective. Regent Mohs proposed that access be removed from the list of objectives, and it was agreed that the concept of access is separate from, but inter-related with, the concept of quality. Therefore, access would be identified as an integral overall value in the vision statement, the objective being to provide quality education to a maximum number of students. The chart then would go on to describe elements of quality. It was noted by Chancellor Helm that other working groups are dealing with issues directly related to access.

Senior Vice President Marrett pointed out that educational quality underlies the work of the Charting a New Course project and proposed a meeting of working group chairs in order to coordinate next steps. It was further suggested that the vision statement and process model be shared with other working groups. It was noted that the process model incorporates areas relevant to what other working groups are doing and could incorporate the area of research and public service as well.

Regent Burmaster felt that the process model was too complex to be readily understood and suggested using the chart, along with the vision statement to communicate with other working groups and the public. She proposed adding to the list of objectives an array of programs to meet student and state needs, and commented that spurring economic growth and preparing students for high wage job is a primary concern of external stakeholders.

Regent Emeritus Boyle proposed that the indicators of quality be made more explicit to better describe what experiences are being provided to students and that a column be added on the consequences of a lack of resources needed to maintain quality. Interim Chancellor Helm suggested deleting the column on who does the measuring and using the column instead for more specifics.

Ms. Cotter suggested that the process model could be useful in showing how the output of the five working groups could be brought together to enhance the university's ability to produce well-educated citizens and promote economic growth.

With regard to key indicators, Chancellor Wells noted the importance of focusing on those that relate to value-added education, rather than only indicators such as retention and graduation rates.

Provosts Spear and Wanat pointed out that impacts of the budget cuts on quality may not be very visible yet because instructional areas were buffered in making the cuts. Chancellor Wells added that some consequences are longer term; for example, fewer faculty result in fewer grant applications, reduction in research funding, and reduced ability to grow the state's economy.

As an organizational framework, Regent Burmaster proposed focus on the following questions:

- 1) What is quality?
- 2) Why is it important?
- 3) What can the Board do to enhance quality?
- 4) What should the Board avoid doing?

It was agreed that this framework would be helpful in articulating the working group's focus on the primacy of educational quality to the Board and to other stakeholders, and that a question relating to what policy issues need to be resolved also could be added.

Regent Mohs indicated that documents would be refined to incorporate discussion at this meeting and circulated among members of the group for comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:35 p.m.