

Charting a New Course for the UW System Our Partnership with the State Working Group

September 4, 2003, 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m

Minutes

Members Present: Patricia Brady, David Beckwith, Mark Bugher, Clint Dederich, Joseph Heim, Margaret Lewis, Ann Lydecker, Don Mash, Bill Messner, Peggy Rosenzweig, Jesus Salas, Matt Sirinek, David Walsh

Members Absent: Don Nichols

Committee Staff Present: Kathy Dickerson and David Miller

Chairman Walsh convened the committee and asked Mark Bugher to review the minutes and last month's discussion. Regent Salas requested the minutes be amended to include the consensus that student fees should not be used to fund financial aid in the future and that the description about certain matters discussed reflect that the discussion was not concluded.

Chairman Walsh asked for a motion to approve the August 21 minutes as amended. Pat Brady made a motion. Joe Heim seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as amended by the committee.

Mr. Bugher reviewed the three sub-topics that the committee chose to focus on:

1. Redefining the "Public" in Public Higher Education
2. Exploration of self-sufficiency with accountability
3. Access and Affordability – Relationship of tuition policy to providing stable funding for the university.

Chairman Walsh asked committee staff to review Regent authority in setting tuition in the past and currently. He then opened discussion regarding tuition and financial aid.

Tuition and Financial Aid

Committee discussion focused on how other states fund financial aid and questioned if others used student dollars. The committee discussed at length the fact that UW has low resident tuition and high non-resident tuition. The committee expressed an interest in reaching a level and predictable tuition policy across all classes of students. It was noted that attempting to immediately reach the tuition peer mid-point would result in increases that are too high. Members expressed concern that neither federal nor state financial aid has kept pace with tuition. In the future the committee will examine better ways to provide stable funding for financial aid.

Access

Considerable discussion focused on the issues concerning access. The UW provides a high degree of access for immediate high school graduates, but a lower level of access for non-traditional students and particularly part-time students who have historically remained in the state. The committee will examine ways to increase access for non-traditional students.

Building Our Relationship with State Policy Makers

The committee agreed that the System's role as a facilitator of economic development is increasingly important to our partnership with the Legislature and Executive branch. We should provide a simple and focused message about what the System has accomplished in that role and how it can further serve the state. We must persuade the Governor and the Legislature that system programs address state workforce needs. To that end, we need to agree on a common set of assumptions and objectives before we approach the policy makers. One example cited was the overhaul of the welfare system. In creating Wisconsin Works (W-2) the state chose to invest additional resources in the program to achieve the goal of a better program in the future because it was convinced that there would be practical and pragmatic benefits. Likewise, we need to convince the Governor and Legislature there will be significant benefits (e.g. economic benefits) to the state. The committee discussed the creation of a similar model for higher education based on economic development. There was consensus that the support of the Governor is critical to the success of the university while building support in the legislature. Similarly, the committee recognized that the state's economic profile and landscape is changing. Manufacturing jobs are decreasing and addressing the needs of the new economy is increasingly important. Accordingly, the System's contribution to economic development needs to focus on the changing economy.

In future meetings the group will focus on building a case for the System's role in economic development and identifiable benefits that will persuade the state to provide additional support to the System. Examples from other states will be examined as models in economic development planning. The committee will also review data on the costs and impacts of high out-of-state tuition.