

MINUTES OF THE RESEARCH AND PUBLIC SERVICE WORKING GROUP  
OF THE  
BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM

UW-Extension  
Pyle Center, Room 236  
Thursday, September 4, 2003  
10:00 A.M.

-Regent Davis presiding-

PRESENT: Regents Davis and Connolly-Keesler, Chancellors Reilly and Wiley, Regent Emeritus Lyon, Provost Martin (representing Chancellor Keating), Academic Staff Representative Hank, Student Representative DeFoe, Faculty Representative Erdman, Professor Dombeck, Vice President Weimer, Assistant Vice President Andrews, and Executive Assistant to the UW-Extension Chancellor Sears.

ABSENT: Regent Randall and WARF Managing Director Gulbrandsen.

Chair Davis called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Following introductions, Regent Connolly-Keesler moved, and Chancellor Reilly seconded, a motion to approve the minutes of the Research and Public Service Working group held August 21, 2003. The minutes were approved.

Chair Davis reviewed the principles that Regent Gottschalk set out early in the process for working groups to take – for the groups to be focused and to address highest priority topics/issues.

Chair Davis reviewed the mission statement adopted at the August meeting: “Harness our research and public service missions to raise the per capita income of the state of Wisconsin while enhancing the quality of education.” She asked the working group members if they wished to make changes in the mission statement. The working group did not make changes to the mission statement.

Chair Davis asked the working group to reflect on the five questions that the committee agreed to address at the August meeting to ensure the questions encompass everything the working group wants them to encompass.

It was stated that most of the questions were “business as usual,” while the problem that the university community in Wisconsin is facing is a base budget of the university that is being crippled, being offset by tuition increases, thereby threatening access, affordability and virtually freezing out middle and low-income families. The importance of convincing state government to maintain its investment in higher education was stressed.

It was also noted that there should be a sustained campaign to communicate the value the UW System adds to the state's economy by virtue of its research and public service core missions. Chair Davis asked the group to consider whether the committee's approach is too conventional? One suggestion was that some "outside the box" ideas be brought back to a future meeting for consideration.

The committee agreed with Chancellor Reilly's observation that the ultimate goal of this committee should be to identify what public service the university performs (and what public service should we be performing), how do we communicate it to the public, and especially the business community, to ultimately influence the elected leadership in the state. It was noted that public service is being performed by campuses all over the state, but that much of it is under the radar screen. Individual legislators are aware of the work taking place on campuses and, yet, when it comes time to the budget and competing issues, it doesn't rise to a level of importance.

It was recommended that business leaders (and eventually labor, non-profit, federal and state legislative leaders, and others) be brought together to seek stakeholder input on what they want and what would be valuable from the university in terms of research and public service.

Specifically, the working group in collaboration with the Chancellors in the following areas will meet with business leaders to listen to their perspectives:

Fox Valley/Oshkosh: Davis, Connolly-Keesler, Reilly, Erdman, Keating  
Superior: Connolly-Keesler, DeFoe, Weimer  
Milwaukee/Southeastern Wisconsin: Davis, Hank, Keating, Reilly  
Madison: Lyon, Hank, Wiley, Weimer  
Chippewa Valley: Lyon, DeFoe, Dombeck, Hank

The questions that will be asked of business leaders are:

- What services do you want from UW System?
- What relationship do you have with the university, if any? What value do you get? What value do you want?
- What would you expect from a public university that you wouldn't from a private university?
- What skills do you value in your employees?
- What, if anything, frustrates you about the UW System? What would you change? How would you change it? What would you retain?
- What is your view on the value of the research programs?

- Do you agree with the mission statement we have outlined: Harness our research and public service missions to raise the per capita income of the state of Wisconsin while enhancing the quality of education? Is our mission statement the right one? How do we get there?

At the next meeting, the group will discuss:

- Trends in research funding in terms of sources, areas of research (hard versus social sciences) and balance between applied and basic research;
- The pressures and obstacles to university research funding;
- Trends in public service funding and examples of public service work;
- The role of business sponsorship of faculty research;
- Focus group outcomes and preparation for future roundtable discussions; and
- Chancellor Reilly will share with the committee the documents that he shares with local legislators about research and public service initiatives in their legislative districts as examples of UW activity.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.