



MINUTES
Montana Board of Regents
Conference Call Meeting
August 26, 2009

Wednesday, August 26, 2009

Roll call indicated a quorum present.

Regents Present: Regents Stephen Barrett, Chair, Clay Christian, Vice Chair, Lynn Hamilton, Janine Pease, Lila Taylor, Todd Buchanan, Janine Pease, and Rob Barnosky. Commissioner Sheila Stearns, *ex officio*, was present. Superintendent of Public Instruction, Denise Juneau, *ex officio*, and Governor Brian Schweitzer, *ex officio*, were both excused.

Sites represented by phone were: Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE), UM-Missoula, UM-Western, UM-MT Tech, UM-Helena COT, MSU-Bozeman, MSU-Billings, MSU-Northern, MSU-Great Falls COT, Miles Community College, Flathead Valley Community College, and Dawson Community College.

Consent

American Indian Heritage Day Resolution; ITEM 144-102-R0809

Chairman Steven Barrett read the resolution and referenced the importance of American Indian history and culture and the significance of this resolution.

Regent Pease stressed the importance of the Montana University System's (MUS) deep-seated recognition of the education of American Indian students.

Commissioner Stearns requested that each campus celebrating American Indian heritage day send pictures of the activities to OCHE to be used on our website.

Regent Pease moved approval of the American Indian Heritage Day resolution. Motion passed 7-0.

System Issues

Two -Year Resolution; ITEM 144-101-R0809

Chairman Barrett explained this resolution is essential because the MOA grant application requires affirmation of the Board of Regents' support prior to the next phase in the process. The chairman noted that, in the last 48 hours, the regents had received a memo from the three community college board of trustees, explaining their concerns about some aspects of the resolution. The chairman acknowledged that the community college trustees believe there were problems in communication about the resolution, and the Commissioner of Higher Education has agreed to have a representative of her office present at every community college board meeting in the future, either in person or telephonically. Chairman Barrett stated that this resolution is a framework which focuses on the strategies the MUS is pursuing, but the strategies are broad; the details



have yet to be worked out.

Chancellor Frank Gilmore, MT Tech, told the board he thought the first strategy of the resolution, bringing the full community college mission to all two-year campuses, was too prescriptive. He would like more flexibility because the strategy would mean substantial changes at MT Tech and could have some costs associated with it. Chairman Barrett said he did not see anything prescriptive about the language.

Discussion followed on Strategy #4, common related instruction requirements. Chancellor Gilmore notes that making these requirements of faculty could interfere with their academic freedom. Provost Engstrom recommended that the term "requirements" be replaced with the term "outcomes." Chairman Barrett responded that the wording in the resolution does not mean common instructional methods, but asked Deputy Commissioner Moe if "outcomes" might be a good substitution for "requirements."

Deputy Commissioner Mary Moe explained the word "requirements" more closely reflects the language of the board's existing policy on these foundational courses, BOR 301.12, and because it is broader than the word "outcomes," it includes outcomes but might include other ways to address the problem the strategy is designed to address. Currently, the foundational courses in the same career paths differ widely across campuses, which makes it very difficult to give students in high schools throughout the state consistent and comprehensive guidance about preparation for a particular career path. She gave the example of the difference of the level of math proficiency for radiological technician programs throughout the state, ranging from Introductory Algebra to Intermediate Algebra to College Algebra.

Chancellor Frank Trocki, MSU-Northern, suggested including MSU-Northern and UM-Western in Strategies #7 and #8 to be part of the integrated data system and the virtual college. Deputy Commissioner Moe said that MSU-Northern and UM-Western were specifically included in #5 because they serve under-served areas, but because of their two-year programming, they are assumed to be a part of Strategies #7 and #8 as well. Chairman Barrett said that inclusion is part of the ultimate goal.

Associate Commissioner Tyler Trevor clarified that #8 should be done at both the two-year and four-year campuses.

Returning to Strategy #4, related instruction requirements, President George Dennison suggested using admission requirements instead of instruction requirements.

Deputy Commissioner Moe said it is the difference in requirements that is the key issue. When related requirements differ, students at one campus must spend extra time taking remedial work that would not be required at another campus due to the difference in each campus program. Deputy Commissioner Moe stated that the intent of the strategy is to convene faculty and representatives of business/industry on a state-wide basis to determine how the requirements can be more consistent.

President Jane Karas said she had concerns of how Flathead Valley Community College (FVCC) would implement the different items in the resolution and also wondered if there might be some accreditation issues that would need to be addressed



by the campuses.

FVCC trustee, Bob Nystuen, said the community colleges would like to see more communication on this issue and the financial impact addressed. Mr. Nystuen said the resolution could possibly limit class instruction options for students.

Chairman Barrett said the context for this resolution has been discussed for over a year and that this has not just recently come up. He recognized the local responsibilities of the community colleges and stated that the long-term objective is to implement the resolution and make the two-year system more utilized and cost-effective throughout the state. He reminded the participants that just because a decision is made that everyone does not agree with does not mean their concerns have not been heard.

Rusty Milliron, Miles Community College (MCC) trustee said he is against any systemization that would hinder MCC from meeting the needs of the community and their students.

President Stefani Hicswa, MCC, said how the strategies are implemented will determine the effect on their campus. President Hicswa said there will be implications at MCC with the integration of Banner at Dawson Community College (DCC).

Deputy Commissioner Moe responded to concerns expressed about communication. She said that she has engaged a large variety of groups during the three months since the regents' first resolution. There have been numerous meetings, which have included the presidents and deans of the two-year campuses and the people participating in this conference call. In addition, in the past month there have been weekly electronic communications to all the MOA State Team, the two-year colleges and the tribal colleges, explaining every point of the regents proposed Resolution #2 and requesting feedback. Deputy Commissioner Moe said she has already made a number of modifications to the proposed details of the resolution as a result of the extensive communication involved. Deputy Commissioner Moe acknowledged that one can always communicate better and she will strive to do so. However, she stressed, it is imperative to enter into a time of deep change regarding two-year education because the need in Montana for affordable, efficient opportunities is high. She said the resolution represents the best way for Montana to move forward to achieve the goals set a year ago to achieve higher education attainment in Montana. Deputy Commissioner Moe encouraged passage of the resolution by the regents.

Chairman Barrett said the goals in the resolution go hand in hand with the reform agenda of the Board of Regents. He said the current two-year system in Montana cannot survive without some drastic changes. Chairman Barrett recognized that the campuses are basically saying they would prefer to not align courses which could narrow the options for students.

Regent Pease recognized the concerns of the community colleges regarding the level of involvement but reminded the board that there was an extensive two-day meeting in May 2009 with all the two-year campuses, including the tribal colleges that dealt with this same topic. She said the discussions and electronic communications were extensive and included all the community colleges, so they were in fact included



throughout the entire process. Regent Pease said higher education in Montana is at a moment when change is necessary and not optional. Continuing to do things the same as the system has done in the past will not work at this time. Regent Pease said there has been a tremendous and comprehensive amount of correspondence and communication on this for months. She reminded the board that the university system has been attempting to draw attention to this for months. Regent Pease said it is critical to have the involvement of the community colleges, but the time to move forward is now and it needs to be done immediately. She applauded Deputy Commissioner Moe's efforts to involve all parties throughout the entire process.

Chairman Barrett addressed the concern of the community colleges' trustees and said the regents' protocol is to communicate with the community college president and the presidents should be communicating with their respective boards.

Commissioner Stearns added that Deputy Commissioner Moe has been communicating with the presidents of the community college campuses and explained that the resolution has been brought up in numerous open meetings, along with extensive communication over the past 18 months. Commissioner Stearns said Deputy Commissioner Moe did communicate with the Two-Year Council what the potential bullets in the resolution might be. Commissioner Stearns said her office will continue to communicate and try to improve this, considering the points brought up in this meeting, to make this work as well as possible. She told the board that until the MUS achieves more commonalities, we will continue to completely baffle and disempower the high school counselors as well as the students and their families throughout the state. Commissioner Stearns said while OCHE continues to welcome comments and adjustments, and it is imperative to move forward on this.

Chairman Barrett said the Board of Regents has approval authority in everything that will happen in association with the resolution and that, as this initiative progresses, those strategies will be coming to the Board of Regents for approval before being implemented anyway. He said it is important to move this forward at this time as this is an important step, being an outline for approval to move the MOA forward.

Mr. Nystuen encouraged the regents to move forward with the MOA resolution because it is too important for the state of Montana, and he encouraged further dialogue.

Regent Hamilton moved approval of the Two-Year Resolution. Motion passed 7-0.

Commissioner Stearns informed the board that the regents workgroup on reform and reinvention is starting up with Regents Buchanan, Hamilton and Regent Pease and including several members of the public. The website for the workgroup shows the relationship of the MOA Initiative to the workgroup and the work it does, as well as the connection of the outcomes-based funding and the mission review process starting for all campuses. She said all of these are feeding into comprehensive change for higher education in Montana.

The meeting adjourned at 12:17 PM.

The executive session portion of the meeting was held in Room 102A.



MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

- Discussion of Pending Litigation

Posted on

Approved by the Board of Regents on

Date

Date

Sheila M. Stearns
Commissioner of Higher Education
and Secretary to the Board of Regents

Stephen Barrett
Chair, Board of Regents