

Interinstitutional Faculty Senate

*Hamersley Library 310a
Western Oregon University
Monmouth, OR
Friday, April 3, 2009*

Present (Senators): Joel Alexander (WOU), Lee Ayers (SOU), Duncan Carter (PSU), Janet Crum (OHSU), Peter Gilkey (UO), Grant Kirby (OIT), Kirsten Lampi (OHSU), Kerry Loewen (EOU), B. Starr McMullen (OSU), Ron Reuter (OSU), John Rueter (PSU), Paul Simonds (UO), Joanne Sorte (OSU)

Present (Visitors/Guests): Dalton Miller-Jones (OUS Board), Robert Turner (OUS), Rosemary Powers (OUS)

IFS President Gilkey called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM

Reports from the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Task Force and the Joint Boards of Education - Bob Turner, OUS (1:00-2:05)

Turner distributed a handout outlining his report from the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Task Force. The Task Force formed in February, 2007, consisting of assessment gurus from OUS campuses plus an IFS representative (Ayers) plus Turner and Ruth Keele from the Chancellor's office.

Their agenda has three components:

1. Fitting in with efforts of the American Association of Colleges and Universities to enhance evidence of student learning.
2. Working with other university systems to enhance student learning and evidence of student learning. These efforts extrapolate No Child Left Behind to universities.
3. Crafting a message: What can we tell people outside the academy that gives them confidence that students get more than a piece of paper?

Discussion followed, which included the following points:

1. Some of this work is a result of the Spellings Commission, as well as the fact that higher ed has not been good at getting the message out about what we do.
2. Moving from an input model to an output model; accountability.
3. Turner expects that this work will result in a report to the board.
4. Accrediting agencies aren't mentioned as a recipient of the information from this body. Perhaps they should be added, since part of the motivation for the work of this group is to make sure that accrediting agencies are satisfied.
5. Turner is planning campus visits to talk with faculty. When we hear about these visits to our campus, we should contact the person in charge of learning outcomes and assessment to make sure that faculty with a range of opinions are included in the meeting. Turner wants to include faculty who are resistant as well as faculty who are already assessing outcomes and/or are interested in doing so. He wants the full spectrum of opinions in a room at the same time. We should consider inviting faculty members personally to get them to participate. Turner wants more faculty voices in this process.

6. At PSU, there are political issues related to how goals developed as part of the assessment process.
7. The real question they are trying to answer is, What do students get for their money when they leave the institution?
8. The American Association of Colleges and Universities has surveyed employers to find out what they want as evidence of learning. Employers said they wanted faculty reports rather than portfolios or test scores. Critical thinking and communication were the key traits employers wanted.
9. What evidence convinces us that students can think critically and work well with others? The answers to that question could determine which learning assessments we use.
10. What's the disconnect between what is being produced at the department or program level by faculty vs. at the institutional level by non-faculty?

What Turner needs from the IFS:

- Our assistance in getting a diverse range of faculty to participate in his campus visits
- Names of faculty with whom he should meet

Turner reported that the Joint Boards of Education have been working on standardizing the way college credit is issued for achievement in advanced placement, dual-credit courses, and International Baccalaureate. They have finished with the first two and are now working on International Baccalaureate. Students participating in International Baccalaureate can take individual IB courses and exams or earn an IB diploma. OUS institutions are inconsistent in how they treat IB credits and diplomas. OSU and WOU are the only OUS institutions that have policies regarding IB diplomas, for which both give 45 credits. Currently there's some contention regarding how many credits should be awarded for an IB diploma. While IB is a rigorous international program, if OUS institutions are going to grant a full year of credit for an IB diploma, they want some data to back that up.

WOU and OUS admissions issues - David McDonald, Associate Provost, WOU (2:05-2:55 PM)

McDonald described WOU's current status and discussed the Board's new policies regarding a common admissions process.

WOU is growing enrollment successfully by emphasizing retention as a higher priority than recruitment. Nationwide, it --costs \$500-700 on average to recruit a new student. Each student who leaves costs the institution money and leaves with debt and possibly lost dreams. The poor economy has helped overall, because more people are interested in college. However, McDonald thinks WOU will see lower yield (yield=students who are accepted and actually matriculate) for non-resident students because of the economy. In a period of uncertainty, students typically behave more conservatively and stay closer to home. So, he thinks fewer students from CA and WA will enroll in OUS institutions. Conversely, local students will be much more likely to stay near home and enroll in an OUS institution. The challenge will be to retain those students, since an OUS institution may not have been their first choice in a stronger economy.

At WOU, applications are up 15% overall: up 25% for resident students and down 5% for nonresidents. Admitted students are up 20%. WOU is having its greatest success with Latinos, the only population group projected to have significant growth in high school graduates over the next 20 years. In Oregon, the heart of Latino growth is in the Willamette Valley, which is good for WOU.

In OUS institutions overall, applications are up 10%, and admitted students are up 12%. With respect to applications and admissions, every campus is better off than it was a month ago. However, because of the economic situation, the usual predictive models do not apply. McDonald thinks some students are applying to (and being admitted to) more than one OUS school, somewhat inflating these numbers. More students are attending multiple orientations, even though they cost money, so OUS institutions may see a higher rate of "summer melt" (the change between the number of students who have accepted admission vs. the number that actually show up). He recommends flexibility as we go into fall term, because we face lots of uncertainty.

At WOU, they believe that retention begins with the application process. They want to get applicants to envision being a graduate of WOU, and they encourage them to plan to graduate in 4 years.

WOU is making orientation week more academically rigorous. They used to focus on the social aspects of college, but students don't seem to need that. Now they are trying to connect students with faculty--holding writing workshops, faculty lunches, etc. They are engaging faculty earlier in the recruitment process, including meeting with prospective students while those students are still in high school.

Students without a declared major are twice as likely to not return for their sophomore year. Only 50% of undeclared students return for sophomore year, compared to WOU's overall retention rate of 75%. So, WOU is working with undeclared students more, including the summer before they enroll.

Today the Board adopted a common admissions process with the following components:

1. All OUS institutions will add the following question to their applications: Would you consider admission to other OUS institutions?
2. OUS information systems will provide technical support to identify students who check YES and disseminate that information to other OUS institutions if (and only if) the student is denied admission by the school to which s/he applied.
3. The Chancellor's staff will develop the mechanics of the process, including admissions and aid packaging. If another OUS institution wanted to admit the student, the student would receive the offer of admission and an aid package prior to receiving a denial letter from the original institution. McDonald thinks that aid packaging may be removed from the plan because of federal aid regulations that may prevent institutions from sharing aid information.
4. Students offered admission to another institution through this process will not be charged an additional application fee.
5. This process will begin with applications for fall 2010.

Discussion:

- Would a school give preference to someone who checked "N"? McDonald hopes that admissions decisions will not be influenced by which option the student checks.
- Many students will probably ignore the box and continue to apply to all the schools in which they're interested. It will be in their best interests to apply separately to their top choices to qualify for scholarships, etc. Checking the box will be an advantage to students who maybe apply late or who just miss the GPA cutoff for admission to a flagship school.
- Will schools that pick up students rejected by another institution be perceived like community colleges?

Requests regarding quantitative/math requirements – Bob Turner, OUS (2:55-3:00 PM)

Beginning next week, OUS will survey faculty about math/quantitative requirements in their classes. Turner would like us to encourage faculty to respond to the survey. OUS wants to find out what math should be required for high school graduates.

OSU has arranged with a school district (either Beaverton or Hillsboro – Turner isn't sure which) to give high school students access to the OSU math placement test, so they can see what will be asked of them. Turner would like to know if other institutions are interested in similar arrangements so that students at any high school could access math placement exams, take the exams at any time, and have their score included in the institution's data records.

These efforts grew out of OUS' work with the Department of Education on math standards for high school students.

BREAK (3:00-3:15)

WOU issues and status - Kent Neely, WOU Provost (3:15-4:00)

Neely welcomed IFS members to the WOU campus. In 33 years in higher education, he has never seen a recession like the current one--or its impact on higher education. WOU gets about \$20 million from the state, and they have been told to prepare for as much as a 30% (\$6 million). A cut of that magnitude will affect their basic operations. In higher education, we have little elasticity in how we operate; we can only economize so much before affecting the meaning of the degree and the nature of the educational experience.

In higher education, we have very limited revenue streams: tuition, gifts/grants/contracts, legislative funds. We don't have the agility to bring something new to the market in a short period of time. We sell seats in classrooms.

Impact of cuts to WOU: WOU will increase tuition but hope to limit the increase to no more than 9.5% for each year of the biennium. WOU has a "tuition promise," under which they guarantee that a student will pay the same amount tuition all 4 years. They will increase tuition remissions by \$250,000 to reduce the impact of tuition increase on students with limited ability to pay. They hope to increase admissions, and applications up 15% over last year. Their recruitment and retention efforts have been successful. They hope to see growth in transfers too; they think that students who might have gone to private schools or schools in California will stay closer to home instead.

Administrators at WOU took 4.6% voluntary reduction in salary between March and June, 2009. That reduction can be mandated throughout OUS beginning with new fiscal year, subject to collective bargaining agreements. WOU plans to award all increases for promotions. They will limit filling new positions but not freeze hiring completely. They plan for staffing levels to remain the same, but some positions are being left unfilled. They hope to find some savings in financial management, e.g. bank and credit card fees, membership fees, travel.

WOU is expected to have a 10% fund balance rather than the usual 5% because of its tuition promise.

Today the Board approved 2 policies, one regarding minimum class size and one regarding program size. Provosts will have to report annually on classes with fewer than 10 students or programs below the established minimum and provide a reason (attached to educational need) why they were maintained.

We can't measure the success of a student's education with a single class; we need to keep in mind what we are doing long-term. What is the meaning of higher education for the state and the community at large? People outside higher education may think it's like making widgets, that we can make cuts right now that will have dramatic impact. Suspicion of higher education has grown over last decade.

The Governor and the Legislature have reduced salaries and staff by 5%. The governor says that he expects all state employees to "have skin in the game." Because of collective bargaining agreements, it isn't clear how reductions will be implemented.

Public employees are an easy target.

WOU has \$30 million in capital projects, including some going back to 2000 that could start easily and which fit with the Oregon stimulus package. But those projects won't benefit instruction directly, and we can't move money between capital and other accounts. So we can't use these funds to address more pressing needs.

He has discussed tuition with students. Over the last 2 decades, studies show that tuition increases above 7% negatively affect the number of students who can come to college. But now even double-digit increases aren't prompting complaints from students. WOU is trying to keep increases under 9.5%, because accessibility and affordability are critical for WOU.

Discussion:

- Miller-Jones commented that enrollment increases are attributed to campus efforts to promote the Oregon Opportunity Grant. Most new enrollments are not from higher-income communities but from populations new to the college experience. His Completion Committee is concerned that tuition increases therefore will be likely to reduce enrollment.
- Is the 7% figure at which enrollment drops dependent on the economy at the time? Yes.
- If administrators are asked to take salary reductions, they would be willing as long as it's equitable and consistent. We need to be sensitive to salary differences too. People earning low wages will have a harder time. Can a voluntary reduction be deducted from taxes as a charitable contribution? That is being determined at the institution level. At UO, staff could choose a 4.7% reduction in FTE or a charitable deduction.
- The statement says that campuses will reduce salary costs by 4.6% in next biennium but does not specify how they do it. The reduction, however, is not voluntary.
- At OSU, all faculty have been asked to take voluntary reductions in this biennium.

Chancellor's report - George Pernsteiner (4:00-5:15)

The February revenue forecast was bad, and the May forecast is likely to be worse. Pernsteiner guesses that the US economy will probably bottom out sometime this quarter, which means that we will bottom out about 15 months later. He doesn't think the economy will get better here till the middle of next year. Oregon could see a \$5 billion shortfall for next biennium--or worse. Much of the state's revenue the last few years has come from taxes on capital gains, and it's unlikely that capital gains will be very

high this year. If we have a slow recovery, the budget is likely to hold. If we have a rapid recovery, we will have kicker checks. Neither of these scenarios will get more revenue into our budgets in 09-11. What we see in May will probably be the best we will get in this biennium.

What do the co-chairs plan to do with the budget? They have said that they will have their budget ready on May 18, allocating gross numbers by subcommittee. The money for the Education Committee may be further subdivided by K12, etc., but we don't know yet if the subcommittee chairs will have a lot of influence on how the money is divided. If they have some influence, then OUS wants to make a good impression on them. Pernsteiner thinks that the committee is favorably disposed toward higher education, not just K-12. The co-chairs say they will take 3 different budgets around the state to see if voters are willing to consider any kind of tax increases:

- No revenue increase budget (all cuts)
- About \$.5 billion in revenue (cigarette and beer taxes, corporate minimum, etc.)
- Over \$1 billion in revenue.

There has been polling on several factors, including a surcharge on income tax, which is what Oregon used to get out of the 1982 recession. That idea polled only 14% favorable; voters are not ready for higher income taxes.

OUS has been asked to prepare for a 30% budget reduction, but the actual cut is more likely to be about 20% because of new rules regarding use of federal stimulus money. The rules specify that higher education funding cannot drop below 2005-2006 levels of support (about a 20% cut) unless a) the state gets a waiver, b) the overall state budget drops by at least the amount of the cut to higher education, and c) K-12 education is cut by at least as much as higher education. For the first time, the OUS budget is as well-protected as the K-12 budget. David Wu, among others, was instrumental in getting these maintenance of effort provisions included, because he didn't want tuition to go up excessively.

Nevertheless, OUS will post its plan for a 30% cut on its web site. The OUS response to that magnitude of cut will include an average tuition increase of 12% for in-state undergraduates. The actual rate will vary by campus. 30% of the increase in tuition revenue will be devoted to need-based financial aid to address affordability issues. OUS does not want to be accused of stealing Oregon Opportunity funds via tuition increases.

OUS institutions are seeing significant enrollment increases--8-9% at WOU, EOU, and OIT. OUS will use these figures to show huge demand. If it weren't for tuition increases, we would expect to see an increase of 5000 students next fall. With tuition increases, we likely will see a decrease of 5000 students next fall. Student demand is driven in large part by the economy.

Much discussion followed, but given the uncertainties involved, it was decided not to report specifics in the minutes as things are changing so rapidly.

Pernsteiner asked the Board for 5 key points to take to the Legislature:

- 30% of any tuition increase will be used for financial aid to offset harm to low-income students
- Instruction, research, and student services will be held as harmless as possible, with cuts taken primarily in other areas.
- The OSU-Cascades campus will be cut by more than 30%. He acknowledged that this issue will be a political football.
- Support for small schools will be reduced by less than 30%, but OUS will move toward shared financial management and focused curriculum for these schools.

- Salary costs will be reduced by 4.6% in 2009-2011—the same percentage the governor is asking of all state agencies.

OUS will be asking some faculty members for individual messages. He'll work with Gilkey and Alexander on that.

What does the Chancellor need from IFS?

- The Board asked Gilkey to once again furnish information on how budget cuts are affecting individual campuses.
- The Chancellor would like suggestions that would make the new policies clearer and/or better. He wants us to point out problems with them.
- Next month, when have a better sense of the budget, how should we approach it without harming student success or research?

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Crum
Secretary, Interinstitutional Faculty Senate

Web page spun on 8 April 2009 by Peter B Gilkey 202 Deady Hall, Department of Mathematics at the University of Oregon, Eugene OR 97403-1222, U.S.A. Phone 1-541-346-4717
Email: peter.gilkey.cc.67@aya.yale.edu of Deady Spider Enterprises