

Memorandum

TO: Members of the Ohio Board of Regents
Chancellor Eric Fingerhut

FROM: Jim Tuschman

SBJ: Meeting of the Committee of the Ohio Board of Regents
on June 14, 2007 Concerning Preparation and Organization
of the Condition Report on Higher Education
Held at the Regents' Offices Columbus, Ohio

DATE: June 25, 2007

CC: Vice Chancellor for Finance Rich Petrick
Director of Performance Reporting Darrell Glenn
Assistant Director of Communications Bret Crow,

Regents in attendance included Edmund J. Adams, Donna M. Alvarado, Bruce R. Beeghly, James F. Patterson, Walter A. Reiling, Jr., M.D., James M. Tuschman.

Regent Staff Members in attendance included Chancellor Eric D. Fingerhut, Senior Vice Chancellor Garrison Walters, Vice Chancellor for Finance Rich Petrick, Vice Chancellor for Operations Kristina D. Frost, Director of Performance Reporting Darrell Glenn, Assistant Director of Communications Bret Crow.

Regent Tuschman opened the Committee meeting to discuss the Condition of Higher Education report by summarizing the contents of other states' reports he had reviewed noting that they contained a "commonality of questions and issues" throughout these reports.

Regent Tuschman asked the group for discussion concerning whether the report should be a shorter graphically pleasing report or a much longer report. After discussion it was proposed that the report should be short and concise with good graphics and divided into two parts. The first part being the Condition of Ohio Higher Education and the second part being the Chancellor's strategic or master plan.

It was noted by Regent Adams that there should be an executive summary with respect to this report.

It was further noted that any recommendations the Regents make should be made by the Chancellor.

Regent Patterson suggested building off the existing Performance Report instead of "starting over." A discussion was held on this issue. There were some suggestions that a fresh report should establish a base line for comparison purposes in future years. Also, the trends that develop over time can be used to help evaluate the Chancellor.

Discussions were had as to whether the Chancellor's evaluation mandated by the statute should be included in the report. Generally it was the opinion that the Chancellor's evaluation should not be an integral part of the report.

The Committee discussed the importance of integrating the data from the Performance Report. This data should be obtained each year. This data could be treated as an addendum to the Report.

The Committee discussed the idea that the Reports should be designed so that they can be compared year to year. In this way, trends can be established.

In response to the question -- what topics should be included in the Report? -- Regent Adams noted that we should detail the full range of data from the Performance Report, and this data should continue to be gathered in the same way, to insure its accuracy and reliability.

Regent Tuschman asked if the information from the Productivity Report should also be included in the Condition Report. He asked for feedback from the Staff on this issue.

Vice Chancellor Frost recommended that the Productivity Report be used to demonstrate the 1% and 3% savings required by campuses in the budget bill. The campuses should be asked to inform the Regents on what is driving costs/tuition increases and how they are controlling expenses.

Regent Alvarado recommended proving transparency for the cost structures in Higher Education because they are not well understood by the legislature.

Thereafter discussions were held concerning "perception" with respect to Higher Education accounting. Discussions were held concerning the legislature's concern regarding the credibility and accuracy and the understanding of information submitted from the Higher Education community.

The Committee then spent some time discussing the need to hire a design consultant for the project. Regent Tuschman said he would speak to the Chancellor about this idea.

The group also discussed whether the Condition Report should set a vision for what Ohio needs to be or focus on the performance of the system year to year. We will continue to discuss this matter.

Next a discussion took place on obtaining information for the report. Here the Committee discussed the fact that we want to obtain input from diverse stakeholders to create statewide strategic priorities for Higher Education – this will help us to continually update the statewide priorities so that they are founded on sound research and reflect responsiveness to the needs of today’s students and their institutions of Higher Education.

Discussions were then held concerning types of stakeholders to be interviewed. They should include business leadership, political leadership, boards of trustees, presidents and other Higher Education leaders. We would consider focus groups, polling, Chamber of Commerce discussions and private meetings, along with the review and analysis of pertinent data to help ascertain the condition of Higher Education. We discussed organizing facilitated conversations with focus groups. We would designate areas of inquiry so that the focus groups do not become platforms for wide-open discussions.

The group concluded that focus groups and gathering polling data from the public would be a better way to gauge people’s impressions of how the Ohio system of Higher Education is performing. The group also considered the idea of holding hearings to hear from students, faculty, deans, alumni, etc. and private meetings with the leadership of selected colleges and universities, but this idea was rejected.

The Institute for Policy and Research at the University of Cincinnati was suggested as a polling source. Focus groups might include faculty and trustees and other stakeholders.

Chancellor Fingerhut advocated for integrating the Condition Report with the Chancellor’s strategic plan to offer ideas on what to do next to improve the state of Higher Education in Ohio. He also recommended including business and political leaders in the groups of people sought out for feedback.

The Chancellor also stated that he would not be ready to submit his report by the end of 2007. A suggestion was made that the Regents adopt the same schedule. We will initially target the Spring of 2008.

We considered the following categories as possible topics to include in the Report:

1. Evaluation of the quality of Higher Education -- that is are we producing the workforce needed in Ohio?
2. Evaluation of capital expansion programs and the need for funding repairs and maintenance throughout our campuses.
3. The STEMM discipline.

4. The impact of the new money allocated by the legislature.
5. The impact of the tuition freeze.
6. Research dollars in the various institutions.
7. Graduation rates and numbers.
8. Student enrollment.
9. Costs per FTE.
10. Affordability.
11. Community College system.
12. A look at the organizations set up to serve statewide purposes such as OhioLINK, etc.
13. Evaluation of the prioritization of academic programs and services.
14. Technology transfer and research.
15. Retention of students within the state.
16. An evaluation of graduate education.
17. Centers of excellence.
18. Distance learning.
19. Collaborations.
20. Adult education.
21. Cost of remediation.
22. Preparation of students in Ohio.
23. Participation of students in Ohio.
24. Affordability of Higher Education.
25. Completion of degrees in Ohio.
26. Benefits received by the state from its investment in Higher Education.

Regent Adams recommended that the Report address the question whether Ohio is producing college students in disciplines that meet the needs of the Ohio economy. In this regard, he requested that the Staff look to current studies in employer surveys and explore whether grade inflation has had a negative impact on educational quality.

Regent Tuschman concluded the meeting by asking that notes be circulated to Regents the following week.

At the next meeting of the Board of Regents (July 19th), Board members will discuss designing a questionnaire to gauge perceptions of Higher Education, begin work on the Report's format and categories for discussion and discuss the timing of releasing the Report. He noted that the Board will make a decision on the proposed September retreat – which was recommended under the original assumption that the Board would submit its Condition Report by the end of the 2007 calendar year.

A copy of the agenda of the meeting prepared by Regent Tuschman is attached.