

**NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE FULL COUNCIL AT ITS NEXT MEETING. SHOULD REVISIONS BE MADE, THEY WILL BE INCLUDED AS AN ITEM IN THE MINUTES OF THAT MEETING.**

Minutes of the Meeting of the  
**COUNCIL FOR EDUCATION POLICY, RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT**  
Wednesday, August 13, 2003  
Florida Gulf Coast University  
Ft. Myers, Florida

**Members Present:** Akshay Desai                      Bob Taylor  
William Gentry                                      Elaine Vasquez  
Bob McIntyre                                        Harold Wishna

**Members Absent:** Diane Leone  
Pat Telson

Vice Chairman Bob Taylor opened the meeting and welcomed the Council members. Vice Chairman Taylor introduced Mr. William Gentry, the Council's new appointed member.

**Welcome**

Vice Chairman Taylor introduced Dr. William Merwin, President, Florida Gulf Coast University. Dr. Merwin welcomed everyone to FGCU.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of July 9, 2003, were approved as circulated.

**Chairman's Report**

Chairman Akshay Desai said that the Board of Governors' decision not to allow enrollment caps by the university presidents captured his attention. Chairman Desai said he supports the idea because he feels we need to continue improving access for our students. Dr. William Proctor said that one of the critical concerns in the State of Florida, with the budget cuts in funding, is that some institutions say we basically need to close down undergraduate education as far as additional new students for the coming year. This has significant ramifications in a growing state. Dr. Proctor said that this is an important issue to consider if it is done on a statewide basis. Dr. Proctor asked Dr. Merwin if all the individual boards took a vote on capping enrollment. Dr. Merwin responded by saying that not all the presidents were in favor of capping enrollment. Dr. Merwin said that each university is in a different position. He said that FGCU is a growing institution and it is not wise economically to cap enrollment. Dr. Merwin said that the Board of Governors approved a budget that calls for growth. Dr. Merwin said that Friday, August 15, 2003, the State University Presidents' Association meets.

Chairman Desai said that he would like the Council to be well versed on this issue.

## **Executive Director's Report**

Dr. Proctor noted that the Department of Education is working on a K-20 Performance Accountability project which is required by law. Dr. Proctor said that it dovetails nicely with the work that CEPRI is doing on both performance measures and our statutory responsibility to grade education in Florida. He said that the final work product, of these groups, is to be adopted on October 8, 2003, by the K-20 Task Force.

Dr. Proctor said he attended the Board of Governors' meeting for the university system. Dr. Proctor said he presented an update of CEPRI activities as well as distributing copies of the "Transforming Education" document prepared by the Council. He said that Mrs. Carolyn Roberts stated that CEPRI would continue to be an item on the BOG agenda.

Dr. Proctor attended the annual meeting of the State Higher Education Executive Officers. He noted that Florida may be viewed nationally as a state in transition for all of education and not easily understood by many in the areas of student articulation, data reporting, accountability, cooperation between the public sector and independent sector of higher education, etc. He said that one of the most interesting sessions of the meeting dealt with "Assessment of Student Learning." He noted that there is concern that No Child Left Behind will be used as a template for this act.

Dr. Proctor said that Ms. Tara Goodman and Mr. Juan Copa presented preliminary results on the 8-year outcomes of 1993-1994 Florida public high school graduates at the University of South Florida's Articulation and Transfer Conference on July 28, 2003.

Dr. Proctor said that Dr. John Wiegman provided a Council update to the Council of Community College Presidents in Orlando. He presented the No Child Left Behind brochure and gave an update on the activities of the Council.

Dr. Proctor presented the CEPRI budget to the Council members.

Dr. Proctor commended Ms. Diane Leone and Ms. Elaine Vasquez for organizing the CEPRI newsletter. He also commended Dr. Glenda Rabby for her duties as chief editor. He mentioned that the next newsletter will be printed in October.

## **State Board of Education Report**

Dr. R. E. LeMon, Vice Chancellor, Division of Colleges and Universities, State Board of Education, said that the subject on access will be a key issue in the context of the Board of Governors. Dr. LeMon said that he attended the Board of Governors' meeting and he believes that the Board did not take a formal vote on the subject of not capping enrollments. He said the Board does understand the dilemma that the universities are in now. The universities are not in a position, given the budget cuts that they have seen in the last several years, to keep accepting students for which they do not receive money. Dr. LeMon said that he believes the Board of Governors, the Chairman of the BOG, and the Chancellor have all indicated that the subject of enrollment should be a conversation among the BOG, University Boards of Trustees, and the presidents.

Dr. R. E. LeMon said that the Higher Education Act that is being reauthorized at the federal level will be like a cold wind blowing from Washington, D.C. into postsecondary education. He believes

that there will be more calls for accountability and identification of student outcomes at the postsecondary level. He said that there has been discussion about exit testing at the postsecondary level. Dr. LeMon said that the Board thinks better accountability and clearer identification of student outcomes is one way to deal with this issue. He said that Florida could be a leader in the area of postsecondary level for these reasons: 1) We have been addressing accountability for twelve years; 2) The universities continue to work on SACS accreditation requirements; and 3) We have an ongoing and improved academic program review process.

Dr. LeMon said that accountability has to be simple and easy to understand for everybody. There needs to be ten or fewer measures that answer key questions with respect to postsecondary education in Florida: 1) Can my child get in, can they get through, and how long will it take? 2) Will they learn what they need to learn? 3) Are they going to get a job when they get out? 4) Given the fact that a college education is expensive, what are the State and institutions doing to insure that it is as good of a bargain in Florida as it can be?

Dr. LeMon said there are several accountability measures in statute and he would like them to focus on ten or fewer questions, and address the language that is in statute that requires 10% of the base funding the institutions to be performance based. This would be about \$185 million for the state university system.

### **Board of Governors' Report**

Dr. Debra Austin, Chancellor of the University System, said that the BOG has become quite active. Dr. Austin said that at the last BOG meeting they approved the proposed budget for 2004 – 2005 which will be included in the State Board of Education's Legislative Budget Request. That budget includes an 8.4% increase for the system of higher education. It also addresses enrollment growth. She said that next month the Board will approve the PECO request. Dr. Austin said that they have received from the universities approximately \$500 million in PECO requests.

Dr. Austin said that a committee meeting will be held in mid-September that will deal with the strategic plan for the state university system. She said they will specifically look at mission differentiation and issues of access and accountability.

### **Master Plan**

Dr. Jon Rogers provided background information on sunshine laws, both nationally and in Florida. Florida's Government-in-the-Sunshine Law provides a right of access to government meetings and information by requiring open meetings, reasonable notice of meetings' time and place, public voting and the recording of minutes. In education settings, debate on these laws centers on balancing the public interest in open government and the privacy rights of individual students and teachers.

Dr. Rogers reported that the most active area of concern is president/superintendent searches and the amount of information that institutions/boards should be required to disclose about individual candidates for executive positions. At the postsecondary level, opponents to the law argue that the law infringes upon the constitutional right of a university board to govern and manage its institution. As a result of this concern, nationally, many public education executive searches are now conducted by external, independent firms. He added that there are statutory exemptions to the law granted by the Legislature, which primarily remove specific education records from disclosure rights.

Mr. Taylor identified three primary issues of concern with the law: leadership selection, performance evaluation and opportunity for open discussion. He suggested getting input from school boards and institution boards on specific changes that are needed to enable them to do a better job. Mr. Gentry recognized the concerns with specific parts of the law, but questioned whether these issues should be pursued in light of the Council's current priorities. Dr. Desai agreed that the Council must stay focused on the priorities identified in the Transformation document.

Dr. Rogers said that information will be requested from selected school boards and institution boards to identify specific changes in the Sunshine Law that would improve the effectiveness of the boards.

### **Legislative Assignments**

**University Contracts** - Dr. Nancy McKee presented the draft contract template, and supporting documents, for the university contracts study. After reviewing the legalities of multi-year contracts, she presented options for each of the decision points in the template, and made a staff recommendation for each of the decision points. The Council decided to discuss issues surrounding the contract, take public testimony, but wait until the September meeting to make decisions.

Mr. Gentry suggested that counsel reassess the issue of binding future legislatures in light of the recent constitutional amendment dealing with education.

The Council discussed whether the contract should apply to all eleven universities. Dr. John Hitt, President of the University of Central Florida, indicated that having a template that could apply to all eleven universities made sense to him, and that it would be logical to have the contract with the Board of Governors. The one concern he had was that the Legislature, rather than the Board, had control of the money. He said that the contracts would need to set out different goals and different styles of operation for the different universities, since they are all in different stages of development.

Mr. Gentry indicated that a three year contract would be preferable to a five year contract. With a three year contract, there will be institutional memory in the Legislature and a good likelihood that the people who approved and appropriated the initial money will feel duty bound to appropriate it over the next couple of years. He said that beyond three years, there is not as much predictability, which is one of the things universities would like to have.

Mr. Taylor inquired about having a three year contract which could be extended each year unless it was cancelled. Mr. Gentry indicated that the one-year notice of cancellation would provide predictability.

Mr. McIntyre noted that the draft template allowed the state to cancel, but not the university, and suggested that this issue be addressed. Chairman Desai indicated that either party should be able to give a one year notice.

After the Council discussed how to resolve contract disputes, Chairman Desai directed Dr. McKee to look at mediation and give the Council some ideas at the September meeting.

Ms. Vasquez suggested that all members of the university board of trustees and all members of the Board of Governors sign the contract. She said that this would indicate to Florida in general that there is unity on a very important issue for the state.

Mr. Bob Cox presented several issues, including:

- An overview of university programs and services,
- A review of student access issues presented in the July meeting, and
- A review of relevant state priorities that have been adopted in the state and Department of Education planning processes.

Mr. Cox began his presentation by noting that the contract would have a function as a symbolic event that could be used to clarify and crystallize a community's expectations and aspirations regarding their university. He also noted that a contract could serve as one vehicle for community mobilization in support of education such as the Council has been discussing.

The review of programs and services covered the program classification structure currently used in higher education reporting and included an example of the annual degree production by level and discipline by the five universities currently included in the study.

Mr. Cox reviewed highlights of the presentation on access from the July meeting and then discussed the University of Florida's tracking and enrollment management system. This program illustrates the issue discussed by the Council at an earlier meeting, that it is possible to reduce student costs despite large fee increases by improving timely graduation. Since implementing this system, the university has experienced a dramatic increase in their four year graduation rate. Until the 1992 entering cohort, the UF graduation rate was very close to thirty percent for each entering class. Beginning with the entering class of 1993, the four year graduation rate steadily improved to the recent level of about fifty percent of a class graduating in four years. The Council then discussed the need for tailoring graduation rate initiatives and measures and to accommodate the differences in student populations of each of the institutions. For example, large numbers of part-time students, and community college transfers, affect the four year graduation rate of universities in different ways that need to be accommodated. A number of other initiatives, such as block fees, were discussed that could be used by universities to limit student costs and preserve access despite possible steep tuition and fee increases. The Council discussed the need for including objectives and measures to monitor access by at-risk students and graduation rates. Mr. Taylor noted that data could be analyzed to associate student debt with the time it takes to graduate.

The State Board of Education's 2002 Management Objectives included three goals and priorities related to universities which could be included as objectives in a contract:

- Put More Qualified Teachers, in Florida's Classrooms.
- Increase the Rates of Postsecondary Completion.
- Increase Access to and Production of Baccalaureate Degrees.

The council also discussed the role of the universities in supporting the high technology industries targeted in the Florida Strategic Plan for Economic Development. This includes both the production of graduates and the transfer of technology into the marketplace. Options for programs and objectives and measures in contracts in support of these priorities were discussed.

Mr. Taylor requested that we do a mock contract with one institution to provide a concrete example of how a contract could look that had a university's proposed initiatives to meet state objectives and preserve access.

Mr. Desai noted how UF with a large number of highly ranked programs with high standards was able to improve graduation rates. He also noted the need to challenge the institutions and measure them with benchmarks in order for them to get better. Dr. Proctor asked for a comment from Vice Chancellor R.E. LeMon of the State University System who noted that perhaps the goal is to find measures that can be tracked over time and expect long term improvement.

The council discussed the limitations of the current system that prevent such initiatives as block fees that can be used to manage student cost and behavior, including practices that occurred several decades when the universities had more flexibility and current practices at private universities.

**Workforce Development Education Funding** - Ms. Goodman and Mr. Copa presented an overview of the workforce education system in Florida and the study plan for developing a new funding methodology for workforce education. The briefing included discussions of supply and demand demographics in Florida, the structure of workforce education, and the current funding formula. Mr. Taylor asked why we have a dual delivery system with the school districts and community colleges and whether this is the most effective delivery system. Dr. Proctor described the dual delivery system as an artifact of how the system developed over the past several decades. Mr. Taylor has requested a consideration of which sector should be responsible for workforce programs. Chairman Desai expressed an interest in whether there is an "optimal" amount of funding to put at risk in a funding formula. Mr. Taylor asked about how this workforce education funding study will address career education in the K-12 sector and to make sure that staff not limit its inquiry to the specific language in the President of the Senate's letter that called for the study.

### **Lunch Presentation**

Dr. Merwin said that Ben Hill Griffin and the ALECO Company donated 760 acres of land for Florida Gulf Coast University to be built on. Dr. Merwin arrived at Florida Gulf Coast University in 1999 which was two years after the institution opened. He said that in 1997 the institution opened with approximately 2,500 students and four buildings. Most of the students were transfer students from the University of South Florida's campus in Ft. Myers. Dr. Merwin said that this fall FGCU will have 6,000 students, and currently there are 34 buildings. The university currently has 32 programs available and in the next ten years the institution will probably need 70 new programs. He said, currently there are 17 graduate programs. Dr. Merwin said that FGCU is now in the NCAA. He said that FGCU will be eligible to play for national championships in one year. The current athletic programs include: basketball, golf, volleyball, tennis, track, and cross country. Dr. Merwin said that there are 1,500 students living in resident halls. He said that 900 students will be arriving this fall.

Dr. Merwin said that FGCU is not in favor of the enrollment caps, but can understand why some of the universities are engaging in the issue. Dr. Merwin said that residence halls, athletic programs, and good quality academic programs help universities grow. He said by 2008, FGCU will have 10,000 students and by 2015, there will be 15,000 students. He said that currently FGCU is the fastest growing university in the United States.

Dr. Merwin said that there are four areas that make FGCU different from other universities:  
1) Faculty do not have tenure; 2) There is a commitment to the environment; 3) It is a student centered operation; 4) The availability of “smart classrooms” - all desks have computer terminals.

Dr. Merwin said that FGCU is committed to community service. Before the students can graduate they must have a minimum of 80 hours working in a community agency. Most students have an average of 500 hours before they graduate.

Dr. Merwin said that FGCU’s vision is to make the community of Southwest Florida a better place to live.

### **Community College Baccalaureates**

This item was deferred.

### **Other Items of Interest**

No other items at this time.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 10, 2003, at the Hilton Tampa Airport Westshore, Tampa, Florida.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 13, 2003.

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William B. Proctor  
Executive Director