

MINUTES
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA
TAMPA, FLORIDA
SEPTEMBER 21, 2006

Ms. McDevitt, Chair, convened the meeting of the Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Governors at 8:30 a.m., in Traditions Hall, Gibbons Alumni Center, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida, September 21, 2006, with the following members present: Jorgé Arrizurieta, Dr. Arlen Chase, Dr. Akshay Desai, Ann Duncan, Charles Edwards, Frank Harrison, Dr. Stanley Marshall, Frank Martin, Lynn Pappas, Ava Parker, Carolyn K. Roberts, John Temple, and Commissioner John Winn.

1. Approval of Minutes of Meeting held August 9, 2006

Dr. Chase moved that the Committee approve the Minutes of the meeting held August 9, 2006, as presented. Dr. Marshall seconded the motion, and members of the Committee concurred.

2. Priority System-Wide Issues Identified by the Council of Student Affairs

Dr. Patricia Telles-Irvin, Vice President for Student Affairs, UF, and Chair of the Council of Student Affairs, explained the mission and functions of the university Student Affairs units. She indicated that, partnering with Academic Affairs, they focus on student learning, recruitment, retention, and student development. She said that one of the primary responsibilities of these units is to provide services so that students can achieve academic success and become educated citizens contributing to their communities and the world. The Student Affairs units provide leadership development opportunities for students. They also manage buildings used for student affairs activities and housing. Dr. Telles-Irvin reported that a large percentage of the revenues to operate student affairs activities are generated by "Activity and Service" fees or through auxiliaries.

She reported on several national trends in Student Affairs. She indicated that, nationally, there has been an increasing need for health services, mental health services, and disability services on university campuses. She said that some recent research indicates that some of the main reasons for student withdrawal from universities are mental health issues, usually depression. Dr. Telles-Irvin said that there is a growing need to address issues of civility, ethics, and honesty on campuses. She indicated that there is increased emphasis on leadership development and service, as well as on diversity understanding and management. Another trend across the country is an increased demand from students for state-of-the-art student affairs facilities.

Additionally, students have growing expectations for cutting-edge technology throughout the universities, not just in the classrooms.

Dr. Telles-Irvin said she had been asked to identify the priorities of the Council of Student Affairs. Focusing on the Board's Strategic Plan, she framed her response in terms of supporting access and the production of degrees. She divided her comments into the areas of retention to graduation, financial aid, and fees. She indicated that the Vice Presidents would like to ensure that there are sufficient Student Affairs staff to meet the needs of the System's growing enrollment, sufficient services to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population, and resources to deal with the health and mental health issues previously mentioned. She said that the Vice Presidents are concerned about the increasing amounts of loan debt with which students are leaving the universities, and indicated the need for more need-based financial aid. Expressing appreciation for the support received through the First Generation Matching Grant Program, Dr. Telles-Irvin reiterated the need for additional funding in the coming years to accommodate more students through this program. Finally, she said that the current caps placed on the Activity and Service fees charged to students have constrained the universities in being able to address some critical needs on the campuses. The Capital Improvement Trust Fund fee, used to fund non-academic buildings, has not changed from \$2.44 per credit hour since 1988. She indicated that such limitations make it difficult to engage in meaningful mid-term and long-term planning.

Dr. Larry Abele, Provost, FSU, said there is a concern nationally about coverage of health care costs, particularly coverage for psychiatric and psychological counseling. He indicated that this concern has led FSU to move to a mandatory health insurance plan. He said the health care fee should be set so that the health care facilities and services meet the needs of students, but this is not possible with the existing caps on these fees. He pointed out the philosophical question about who should pay for health care costs. Dr. Telles-Irvin noted that a certain percentage of students are covered by parental health coverage (e.g., 60 to 70 percent of the undergraduate students at UF). She said the health fee charged by the universities cannot keep up with the current cost to provide needed mental and physical health care.

Governor McDevitt noted the need to align the services provided with the funds available through the fees. She noted the increasing costs of health care everywhere. President Bryant said students need to know the scope of services covered by the fee (e.g., emergency vs. long-term care). President Brogan concurred that the fees cover only a shallow and limited array of service. Ms. McDevitt said that the issue of health care coverage might be an issue to be addressed on a System-wide basis, as institutions grapple with what their obligations are in this matter.

Mr. Harrison asked if there was empirical data on why students withdraw from universities. Dr. Jennifer Meningall, from USF, reported that there is an array of complex reasons, including the previously mentioned mental health issues. She

commented, for instance, that there is a growing need for accommodation services for students with disabilities. Governor McDevitt asked Committee members how they felt about spending more time discussing health, mental health, insurance, and associated matters. Dr. Marshall inquired about what is promised to students when they arrive on campus, and how much the universities owe the students in terms of health services. Commissioner Winn suggested that the Board, in discussion with university personnel and students, determine what degree of health services should be provided. Governor McDevitt concurred and said the Committee needed a broad understanding of what the universities do and should do in this area and that it might be valuable for the Committee to look at some best practices and efficiency options.

3. College Costs and Financial Aid

Governor McDevitt said that this Committee needs to develop expertise in several areas that have a great impact on students, particularly the issues of college costs and need-based financial aid. Dr. Dorothy Minear, Associate Vice Chancellor, introduced this complex topic by pointing out the challenge of providing an affordable, but high-quality education that prepares students to be competitive and successful in a global marketplace and community. The challenge, she said, is to determine the appropriate balance of responsibility for covering the cost of this education, as well as to meet the needs of the most economically disadvantaged students. Dr. Minear went on to provide an overview of financial aid distributed in the State University System.

Dr. Minear introduced Ms. Theresa Antworth and Mr. Kelly Harrison from the Office of Student Financial Assistance, Ms. Karen Fooks from UF, and Mr. Leonard Gude from USF. Ms. Antworth described the process by which students obtain financial aid, how eligibility is determined, and the types of state and federal aid available to students. She said students must apply annually for federal and state financial aid by filing the Free Application for Student Financial Aid (FASFA). There also is a Florida financial aid application process. She explained how the cost of attendance is determined, as well as the expected family contribution. She then went on to provide examples of how financial aid packages are developed.

Dr. Minear pointed out the impact tuition increases would have on various groups of students, depending on whether or not they qualified for Bright Futures and/or had Florida PrePaid Plans. She also outlined some policy issues regarding financial aid for ongoing consideration: Should financial aid be distributed to the neediest students first? Should families be required to share a certain percentage of college costs, and what is the correct balance? Should aid be used to ensure that a certain percentage of Florida's high school graduates attend college? What is the correct balance between merit and need-based aid? How should financial aid policy be linked to tuition and fee policy?

Governor McDevitt inquired about what was included in “cost of attendance.” Ms. Fooks explained that the components of “cost of attendance” at UF include such expenses as tuition, food, transportation, health insurance, housing, utilities, and books and materials. Mr. Gude indicated that USF considers similar components, but acknowledged that not all institutions include health insurance. Governor Roberts inquired how universities were helping their students manage debt. Mr. Gude said USF has developed a University Experience course that includes instruction in financial literacy for students. USF also has a peer counseling program to assist students with these issues.

In response to a question from Dr. Chase, Mr. Gude explained that students are considered to be dependent for federal student financial aid purposes until they reach the age of 24. Dr. Chase expressed concern for students between 18 and 24 whose parents refuse to provide a share of the assistance or the required financial information needed to apply for aid.

Circling back to the discussion of student health insurance, Dr. Meningall responded to a question from Governor McDevitt and explained that not all universities require all students to have health insurance. Dr. Chase asked if insurance could be required and the health fee be removed, with the expectation that services be outsourced.

Dr. Marshall said he had read a number of articles recently about the excessive costs of a college education, particularly at schools in the Ivy League. He inquired whether this was a charge that could be made about the universities in the SUS. He indicated that he would like further review to ensure that such a charge is not justified.

Commissioner Winn said there was a request for an additional \$8 million in financial aid in the State Board of Education 2007-08 Legislative Budget Request, as well as another \$22 million for Bright Futures funding. He noted that, previously, less than 30 percent of students were eligible for Bright Futures scholarships; this figure is now at 37 percent of the students. He also said there is a recommendation for \$16 million for a loan forgiveness program for students preparing to teach in critical discipline shortage areas.

Governor Parker requested that Board staff provide actual cost numbers for students when they discuss tuition increases. She also expressed an interest in looking for ways to assess and address some of the policy issues previously mentioned.

4. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:20 a.m., September 21, 2006.

Mary-Anne Bestebreurtje

Sheila McDevitt, Chair