

MINUTES
FLORIDA BOARD OF GOVERNORS
STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE/
GOVERNOR'S ACCESS AND DIVERSITY COMMISSION
FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA
FEBRUARY 23, 2006

Ms. Sheila McDevitt, Chair, convened the joint meeting of the Board of Governors Student Affairs Committee and of the Governor's Access and Diversity Commission at 8:50 a.m., February 23, 2006, in the H. Manning Efferson Ballroom in the Florida A&M University Student Union, Tallahassee, Florida, with the following Board members present: Dr. Akshay Desai; Ms. Ann Duncan; Mr. Charles Edwards; Mr. Joe Goldberg; Dr. Stanley Marshall; Mr. Frank Martin; Ms. Ava Parker; Dr. Martha Pelaez; Mr. Tico Perez; Ms. Carolyn K. Roberts; and Commissioner John Winn. Additional Commission Members in attendance included the following: Representative Anitere Flores; Dr. Oswald Bronson; Mr. Darryl Marshall; Ms. Carmen Brown; Dr. Lawrence Morehouse; Ms. Keneshia Grant; Ms. DeeDee Rasmussen; and Dr. Gordon Chavis.

1. Call to Order, Welcome, and Approval of Minutes

Ms. McDevitt welcomed Board and Commission members to the joint meeting. She explained that the focus of the day's meeting would be on activities in the middle schools which are designed to enhance college access for underrepresented groups and how those activities relate to the Governor's Access and Diversity Initiative.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the meeting held on January 26, 2006. The motion passed.

2. Guiding Principles for Best Practice and Data Regarding the Middle-School-to-College Pipeline

Dr. Dorothy Minear, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, reported that the interinstitutional Access and Diversity Team and Resource Partners met in Orlando on February 9, 2006, to address many of the issues raised in the last joint meeting of the Governor's Commission and the Student Affairs Committee. She said that Team members discussed guiding principles for best practice in programs designed to enhance access and diversity. The Team asserted that all programs should be student-centered, cost-effective, collaborative, sustainable, replicable, and accountable/measurable. The Team reiterated how critical it is to provide levels of support for students that match the levels of challenge they face with respect to access and success. Dr. Minear proposed that these principles provide a good lens through which to review existing programs and to make decisions about developing and expanding programs. Ms. McDevitt concurred and indicated that the Committee and Commission would keep circling back to these principles throughout their deliberations in the coming months.

Dr. Minear reported that Board staff members were working with colleagues in the Department of Education on a longitudinal study of several cohorts of sixth graders to determine the academic progression patterns of different subgroups. Data from this study will be presented at a future meeting. Additionally, Dr. Minear reported that a Web site had been developed (www.flbog.org/accessanddiversity/) on which materials shared with the Governor's Commission and the Student Affairs Committee would be posted.

3. State-Level Overview of College Reach-Out Program and College Board Partnership Activities That Support Middle School Students

Ms. Monica Hayes, Director of the K-20 Office of Equity and Access in the Department of Education, provided Committee and Commission members with information regarding programs that provide services to middle school students and their families/supporters to improve equity and access along the continuum of the K-20

pipeline. She reported that multiple services had been developed or enhanced to improve equity and access since Governor Bush initiated One Florida - The Equity and Education Initiatives in 1998. She referenced the College Board Partnership, which was created by the Legislature in 2000, and is now known as the Minority and Underrepresented Student Achievement Partnership. Ms. Hayes indicated that one of the main purposes of the Partnership is to help with middle school and high school reform by offering pre-Advanced Placement courses and "vertical team training" courses for middle school teachers. She said that, if students are provided with more rigorous coursework in middle school, they will be better prepared for rigorous high school and, subsequently, college-level courses.

Ms. Hayes reported on a number of other initiatives, including summer institutes to show teachers how to prepare to offer Advanced-Placement curricula; leadership conferences for counselors to share strategies for encouraging students to take more rigorous coursework; and a contract with Kaplan to work with teachers and curriculum builders to infuse more academic rigor into mathematics.

Ms. Hayes reported that the College Reach-Out Program (CROP) is funded by the Legislature and is designed to assist students in grades 6-12. She indicated that CROP serves minority and underrepresented students who are economically disadvantaged, and who are at risk of dropping out. The focus is on after-school, weekend, and summer programs that provide academic support and cultural enrichment activities. Many CROP students are able to spend time on college and university campuses to get a "taste" of what college life is all about and to consider higher education as a personal option. Ms. Hayes stated that CROP partners with the Florida Virtual School, particularly in rural settings, to provide middle school students with support services such as FCAT reviews.

Ms. Hayes indicated that, for some students, the interface with a "consistent, caring adult" through CROP serves as an important "bridge" between schools and families. Parental involvement is encouraged, but is often difficult for individuals holding multiple jobs. She also reported that many CROP consortia reward their achieving students with postsecondary scholarships.

Ms. Hayes reported that, since 1990, CROP has served 105,397 students. She went on to say that, in 2004-05, 38 institutions of higher education served 448 schools in 53 counties. She indicated that, if CROP is able to get the additional \$1 million recommended by the Commissioner and the Governor, CROP hopes to increase the number of students served, particularly from demographic groups less well represented at this time. Additionally, the hope is to strengthen programs, to provide transportation to CROP services for students in rural areas, and to provide laptop computers for some students.

Responding to a question from Ms. McDevitt, Ms. Hayes reported that CROP has higher education consortia which partner with particular schools. Responding to a question from Ms. Parker, Ms. Hayes explained that not all eleven universities were part of a CROP consortium and that limited funds are distributed in response to an RFP process. [Only the University of North Florida and New College of Florida currently are not members of CROP consortia.] Ms. McDevitt requested a map of where the services are being offered, which Ms. Hayes said she would provide for the next meeting. Dr. Desai offered to share a copy of a New York Magazine article, "Success for All," about a program Jeff Greenblatt established primarily for minority students and which costs about \$1,000 per student. Ms. Hayes reported that the cost per CROP student is about \$500 per year, and the graduation rate is about 82%.

Members asked for a delineation of the requested and actual legislative funding for CROP in real dollars over the last several years. Ms. Hayes reported that additional match funds are provided by the universities. Representative Flores indicated that the House Education Appropriations Committee, of which she is a member, will be reviewing the legislative budget request for increased funds. She asked for data regarding the status of students who entered CROP some time ago (i.e., whether they entered and persisted in college, vocational school, etc.). Ms. Hayes indicated that she would provide members of the Committee and Commission with copies of the latest two-year evaluation report as soon as it had been approved by the Commissioner.

Governor Edwards asked for a clarification as to whether there was an opportunity for additional institutions to offer CROP, given the current financial

constraints. Ms. Hayes responded that CROP funds are currently too limited, but Ms. McDevitt suggested there might be other funding sources available to offer the services.

Ms. McDevitt closed this portion of the meeting by mentioning the "Fast Facts" document included in the briefing materials to supplement Commissioner Winn's comments regarding One Florida made at the January 2006 meeting.

4. Panel Discussion Regarding Outreach to Middle School Students, Families, and Supporters

Ms. Katherine Spivey, an 8th grade teacher from Wakulla Middle School; Mr. Craig Fletcher, Administrator of CROP at Tallahassee Community College (TCC); Ms. Joy Marshall, from BelleVue Middle School; and Dr. Kirk Gavin, CROP Administrator at Florida A&M University (FAMU), spoke to members of the Student Affairs Committee and the Governor's Commission about the local CROP consortium. Mr. Fletcher referred to the TCC booklet provided to members of the Commission and Committee. He reported that TCC has programs in the middle schools and provides prepaid scholarships through Project STARS. He went on to say that CROP staff members try to coordinate services from multiple programs to meet the special needs of individual students.

Panelists reported that CROP was advertised through special printed materials, word of mouth, newspapers, television, the provision of scholarships, special assemblies at the schools, churches and community organizations, special awards ceremonies, pictures in yearbooks, etc. In response to a question from Ms. Parker, Mr. Fletcher reported that services are sometimes offered at locations other than schools. Ms. Grant shared that she had been a CROP student in middle school, but that she had traveled to another high school for services.

Dr. Gavin indicated that FAMU CROP was revamped this year and that, after just four months, there are more than 100 students participating. He went on to say that all administrative costs are covered through in-kind services from FAMU. Ms. Spivey emphasized that each middle and high school is completely different and that relationships must be established and services must be designed accordingly. Ms.

Marshall talked about how critical reaching students in the eighth grade is, because it represents a time of important transition for the students, and they need additional support to be able to successfully navigate their way into high school. The panelists indicated that parental involvement is not as strong as they would like for it to be, but that many parents are unable to participate due to other commitments.

Dr. Pelaez encouraged the use of www.FACTS.org as a valuable resource for CROP to use when working with middle school students. Panelists reported that they did use the resource, particularly the "Student Choices" option therein.

Mr. Goldberg asked for information regarding how many CROP students qualify for Bright Futures, given that the average GPA for CROP students is 2.4. In response to a question from Mr. Marshall, panelists reported that the STARS/CROP scholarships only covered tuition, but that they conducted workshops to help students and their families/supporters complete financial aid forms and apply for additional scholarships. Members expressed an interest in how many of the CROP students end up with the Florida Student Assistance Grant. Dr. Desai noted some lack of consistency in the implementation of the programs and wondered whether there was a way to streamline or put into place some common criteria that would increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the programs.

Ms. McDevitt asked about foundation involvement in the scholarship process. Mr. Fletcher reported that TCC raises money for scholarships and then goes through the TCC Foundation, which often matches the funds before they go to the state for an additional match. Both 2-year and 2+2 scholarships are available.

5. Mentoring in Middle School

Ms. Keneshia Grant reported that, at FAMU, the Student Government recognizes that one of the most important ways to create access to college and increase students' desire to attend college is to increase students' knowledge about college. So the Student Government decided to start a mentoring program at the FAMU Developmental Research School (FAMU DRS). Ms. Grant indicated that training sessions for about 30 mentors had been conducted by Florida Campus Compact and Volunteer Florida; eight mentors had passed their background checks thus far. University student leaders

reported that their biggest concern is being able to get and retain mentors because of things such as the cost of fingerprinting and background checks (about \$60), which are not necessarily covered by a school or a university. Ms. Kay Kammel, from the Volunteer Florida Foundation, reported that most large districts pay for background checks, but some of the smaller districts (like the FAMU DRS) do not pay for them. The FAMU Police Department is paying for the mentors' fingerprinting, but FAMU mentors pick up the cost for the background checks.

Ms. Grant said that FAMU student leaders also reported that they are concerned about the sustainability of the mentoring program. They are encouraged, however, by the commitment to the mentoring initiative expressed by the Vice President for Student Affairs.

Ms. Kay Kammel indicated that the issue of background checks would be receiving more attention during the upcoming Legislative session. Then, she drew the members' attention to two documents in their packets: a fact sheet on The Presidents' Focus on Achievement and the actual curriculum which has been designed for the mentoring initiative. She reported that the curriculum includes thirteen different lessons for mentors to use with students during the first fifteen minutes of each mentoring session. The rest of the time is spent on academics. Volunteer Florida is partnering with Florida Campus Compact to use the systems already in place to recruit the mentors. Ms. Kammel reported that there are only seven colleges involved in the mentoring initiative at this time. The plan is to grow the program slowly to ensure quality. Additionally, there are plans to develop a companion curriculum that focuses on math and/or science. Ms. Kammel indicated that they are looking for a university partner to assist with data collection and analysis in order to monitor longitudinal effects of the program.

The panelists reported that they sometimes do encounter some resistance from the middle schools. Their suppositions were that some of the resistance is due to timing problems (particularly during the spring semester), the increased demands on school staff time, and the perceived distraction from FCAT preparation. Middle school

personnel want to make sure that mentors are appropriately trained and are using an acceptable curriculum.

Ms. Rasmussen indicated that the mentoring initiative was rolled out very quickly in the spring semester. She circled back to the principle of sustainability and reported that Florida Campus Compact focuses on tapping into the intellectual capability of our universities to deal with community issues. She said that there are great opportunities for the college students to learn from the mentoring process, as well. She contended that it is important to create the campus infrastructure needed to ensure that campus-community partnerships are sustained and successful over time. Campus Compact works with all of the State universities. When setting up the Focus on Achievement Program, they started with universities with existing successful mentoring programs in place.

6. Panel Discussion – From the Students' View

Members were joined by Ms. Apolonia Villanueva, a first-generation FAMU freshman enrolled in a social work program, and Mr. Leston Green, a first-generation FAMU journalism student. Ms. Villanueva reported that she wants to become a motivational speaker who helps young women become what they have the potential of becoming. Mr. Green reported that he hopes to become a journalist who works for ESPN, setting a positive example for other young Black men from his hometown and elsewhere.

Both provided eloquent, touching stories of the support they received in secondary school and upon entering FAMU which made a college career an option for them. Both indicated that they had participated in the federal TRIO program, Upward Bound, in high school, and spoke highly of the services and support provided. Both indicated that a major barrier for most first-generation students is insufficient funds to cover the cost of university attendance. They indicated they were able to attend FAMU because of the assistance they received through Upward Bound to waive certain fees, to

complete financial aid forms, and to apply for other community and STARS scholarships. Both spoke in favor of the Governor's Access and Diversity Initiative.

Ms. Keneshia Grant asked the students about other obstacles they thought students faced other than college tuition. Mr. Green and Ms. Villanueva mentioned the other costs associated with college attendance and the need just to "have someone to show us the way."

7. Discussion of Governor's Access and Diversity Initiative and Briefing Documents

Dr. Minear reviewed materials available to members regarding their lobbying and communications plan for the Access and Diversity Initiative. Representative Flores reported that the House Committee on Colleges and Universities would probably be hearing the First Generation Matching Grant bill during the second week of Session. Briefing materials included talking points for members and brochures that can be given to legislators and editorial boards.

Dr. Minear reported that the interinstitutional Access and Diversity Team had reviewed the First Generation Matching Grant bill and had provided input as to possible amendments which might strengthen the bill. These recommendations were included in the briefing materials. A sign-up sheet was provided to members for them to indicate the legislators with whom they felt comfortable discussing the Access and Diversity Initiative. Ms. McDevitt indicated that staff would follow up with more details as the Session progressed.

Ms. McDevitt reminded members that the Commission's tenure lasted only through June and mentioned several other topics to be covered in the next several months. She indicated that she wanted to hear more about what community colleges and universities are doing to retain more students and about some promising practices from other states. Ms. Rasmussen mentioned that a discussion about the value of service learning might be an appropriate topic for a future meeting.

Following discussion, members of the Commission and Committee decided that the next meeting would be scheduled for the afternoon of March 22, 2006, (the day before the next scheduled meeting of the Board of Governors) in Tallahassee.

4. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m., February 23, 2006.

Sheila McDevitt, Chair

Dorothy J. Minear, Ph.D.

Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs