

## Board of Governors Student Affairs Committee

### Student Health Insurance: An Update of Activities 2006-2009

- I. On September 21, 2006, members of the Board's Student Affairs Committee discussed System-wide priority issues identified by the SUS Council for Student Affairs, including some of the challenges universities encounter when students have no or insufficient health insurance.
- II. On January 25, 2007, Lesley Sacher, the Director of the Florida State University (FSU) Thagard Student Health Center, provided an overview of the events and findings that led FSU to require health insurance for its students.
- III. Subsequently, the Student Affairs Committee directed Board staff to convene an interinstitutional SUS Task Force on Student Health Insurance to:
  - Gather and analyze data to determine patterns and trends regarding uninsured and underinsured students in the SUS;
  - Assess the magnitude of problems created when students have no or insufficient health insurance;
  - Examine alternative strategies that might be employed to address the problems of uninsured and underinsured students in the SUS;
  - Assess the advantages and disadvantages of State universities providing student health insurance as a benefit for various student groups;
  - Identify and target areas where efficiencies might be gained in providing health insurance to students to best meet their needs and fulfill the goals of the System;
  - Examine the impact of health insurance programs and requirements on university affordability, student fees, cost of attendance, and financial aid;
  - Conduct an analysis of the pros and cons of voluntary student health insurance programs as compared to mandatory and mandatory, hard-waiver programs;
  - Provide findings and recommendations regarding the role of the BOG and its universities in resolving issues surrounding uninsured and underinsured students.
- IV. On June 13, 2007, the Co-Chairs of the Task Force did provide an oral preliminary report to the BOG Student Affairs Committee. At this meeting, members of the Committee asked Task Force members to continue to collect information on: how many students leave our universities due to medical withdrawals, which of those do not have health insurance, etc., programs in other states, and on the impact that uninsured college students have on the communities in which the universities are housed.
- V. On September 27, 2007 the Board of Governors approved amendments to Regulation 6C-6.009 regarding the admission of international students to SUS

institutions. The regulation included revisions to the minimum health insurance requirements for international students in F or J non-immigrant status.

- VI. During deliberations regarding the 2008-09 Legislative Budget Request, Board members identified several issues to be returned to committees for further consideration. On September 26, 2007, the Student Affairs Committee reviewed a request for \$16.8 million for support (i.e., health insurance subsidies) for GAs, TAs, and RAs, and an additional request for \$4 million for graduate fellows. The Committee, and subsequently the full board, voted to support just the request for the GAs, TAs, and RAs.
- VII. During the 2008 Legislative session, Representative Ed Homan expressed interest in sponsoring a bill regarding student health insurance. It was determined that the timing was not right, given fiscal and economic conditions.
- VIII. Student Health Insurance is an issue identified in the BOG Student Affairs Committee 2009 Work Plan that will be reviewed and approved by the Committee, under the leadership of Committee chair Ann Duncan, at its March 26, 2009 meeting.
- IX. The draft work plan calls for the committee to request from FSU a written report/update of the FSU program and policies. Following two years of implementation, FSU is well-positioned to respond to many of the issues raised by the SUS Task Force. The FSU report will include data on the implementation of the policy, including student participation and waivers and case activity, revised health center operating policies/procedures, and additional program adjustments that are now recommended.
- X. Entering the 2009 legislative session, certain legislators continue to express interest in student health insurance and sponsoring legislation addressing specific issues in this area.
- XI. It may be appropriate to reconvene the SUS Task Force on Student Health Insurance to update the BOG Student Affairs Committee on the broad array of national and state student health insurance issues and to consider shared services opportunities within the SUS. Recent and projected state budget reductions will continue to influence student health insurance policy, program funding, and student fee deliberations in the SUS.