

MEETING #427
OREGON STUDENT ACCESS COMMISSION
Wednesday March 20, 2013
DAS – Executive Building
Salem, OR

COMMISSIONERS

Glenda Melton
Bart Howard
Gary Weeks (Phone)
Nagini Reddy (Phone)
Mike Holland

STAFF

Bob Brew, Interim Executive Director
Vic Nunenkamp, Interim Chief Operating Officer
Joyce Berman, OSAC Staff

GUESTS

Colin Wallace, Moss Adams
Christina Clasey, Moss Adams
Brent Wilder, OAICU

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Melton called the meeting to order at 9:33 am. Having a quorum present, the meeting proceeded.

CHAIR'S/COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Chair Weeks and Bob Brew reported on a recent planning meeting of the workgroup focusing on the proposed new Department of Postsecondary Education. The workgroup meeting focused on shared services and policy related items; big picture items of how the department will work with various entities. Chair Weeks and Bob Brew appreciate being able to be a part of the process. There was much discussion around timing of how it will come into existence, relationships with other entities - OSAC in particular. If it passes and the new department is created, it will likely take one year to get people in place and get ready to transfer responsibility. It is unclear yet how HECC and OEIB will work together as that has to be worked through. There are two future planning meetings for the advisory workgroup which will again focus on policy and relationships. Detailed design of the new department will take place at staff level most likely.

Vice Chair Melton asked if there were any other Commissioner reports to present. There were none.

Vice Chair Melton reported on bringing pizza to staff in recognition for a job done well with the Governor's Food Drive.

Vice Chair Melton reported she observed Vic and Bob's testimony to the Ways and Means Committee at the capitol building. The slide show presented by Bob was very interesting. Bob confirmed it is available to Commissioners via email. Glenda said Bob did a great job not only with the presentation itself, but in keeping with protocol as well. She congratulated staff for job well done on that one.

Chair Weeks asked Bob if there was anything that came up in hearing that was a surprise or we should know about that we have not thought about. Bob said, no, the committee was very supportive; he met with both Co-chairs before the meeting and both were very supportive. Committee was very nice; very

gentle and there were no real surprises. Mr. Brew reported that Senator Girod has introduced a bill that would require 50% of OOG funding to be prioritized for STEM students. Mr. Brew did not comment on that other than to acknowledge it. The Governor has yet to take a stance on that bill.

Vice Chair Melton commented that in her observation, they were really supportive of OSAC.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Brew presented his report including budget presentation to Legislature. He thanked OSAC staff who made sure he had information he needed and gave helpful guidance in preparing for the presentation. The second day included guest speakers in support of OSAC and our impact through OOG and ASPIRE; we also received support from our partner, OCF, as our initial and continuous partner of ASPIRE. OCF voiced their continued support of ASPIRE as it expands throughout the state.

Chair Weeks asked if either Bill McGee or Doug Wilson said anything they should know about? Was there any news about where they are heading? Bob said there was no indication and stated they emphasized what he (Bob) has said and took it to the next step of the Governor's vision for the new department. Doug Wilson has not said anything and Bob imagines Doug will wait until he sees the agency as whole before commenting. Bob reported one thing that came up was Senator Girod was very supportive of what we are doing and he thinks OOG is very valuable; he believes OOG combined with the ASPRIE program is very, very valuable; he thinks all efforts of all education agencies are valuable but is wondering what the price tag will be and how we will pay for it.

Mr. Brew provided an update on Oregon Opportunity Grant. At the suggestion of Bill McGee and Doug Wilson and with Ben Cannon's blessing, a letter to co-chairs was sent a couple weeks ago informing them of our intent to award 49% of the Governor's recommended budget with the remaining 50% being awarded next fall. The letters were received without pushback or questions. Commissioner Howard asked if he has it in writing that there is no pushback. Mr. Brew confirmed he has documentation and provided it to the Commission. Mr. Brew provided a handout of an email from Susan Degen, which he will also send electronically to the Commission. Mr. Brew presented various statistics for OOG comparing the current year to last year. Discussion and comment followed. Mr. Brew stated the bottom line is we are not seeing double-digit increases in OOG applicants that we have seen in prior years.

Commissioner Howard asked if we have a way of tracking students for first time students vs. continuing. Mr. Brew said he will do research on first time vs. continuing students and that he has heard from community colleges that there was a stark increase in applicants over the past few year, then it leveled and is now dropping a little. Brent Wilder, OAICU reported that the University of Portland has had a record number of first-time student applications. Mr. Brew reported that OUS is still seeing record number of first time applicants. Discussion about admission rates ensued. Mr. Brew concluded by stating we are not seeing an increase in the number of applicants for Oregon Opportunity Grant.

Lora Carson provided a financial update. She also stated she attended meetings looking at the accounting department in relationship to the new proposed department in order to develop the best structure. Mr. Brew added we are at 83% - on one hand we are saving dollars by having the Executive Director's position remaining vacant; on the other hand we are spending more money by having Lora here full time, and quite a bit on overtime associated with the new scholarship application. We are right on that line.

Vice Chair Melton asked if the overtime was reflected on the current financial statement. Ms. Carson said it was.

Commissioner Howard asked if there is still ongoing need of overtime for the Scholarship application program. Mr. Brew confirmed it continues to be a big resource in terms of process; through January there was \$72,000 in additional costs beyond regular staffing. That includes servers, software packages and everyone's overtime.

Commissioner Holland asked about fall disbursements mentioned earlier in his report. Mr. Brew apologized in that he misspoke and it should be the fall 2013 award lists that have been sent out for the Oregon Opportunity Grant.

SCHOLARSHIP AND ACCESS PROGRAMS

Ms. Nunenkamp expressed appreciation on behalf of staff to the Commissioners for the pizza party; it was delightful and much appreciated. Staff asked she convey how much they appreciate it and that it meant a lot having Glenda, representing the commissioners, to visit.

Ms. Nunenkamp reported she and Bob have met with staff one-on-one because moral has been fluctuating with the application challenges; they pulled staff aside individually to let them know how much they are appreciated and it was well receive. They are working on review of OSAC positions and the proposed new department; working with Krissa Caldwell, CCWD, to figure out what the new org chart might look like and ensure staff are recognized for the work they are doing. There are 8 positions HR has had since March 1st a year ago where the official positions description didn't reflect what they are doing. Now HR is in the process of reviewing them and we are getting wonderful feedback.

Commissioner Howard asked about our HR consultant. Ms. Nunenkamp stated Shari Carter is out due to crises and we are now working with another HR rep, Susie Hosie, and we are very pleased with her responsiveness. Ms. Nunenkamp also stated they have been working with CCWD HR staff and she is really pleased with how this is going; we couldn't have been thrown into a new situation like this and have a partner that is any better than CCWD.

Ms. Nunenkamp reported ASPIRE continues to get accolades and recognition in meetings with OEIB, from which \$1.9 million of their budget is going to ASPIRE. Lori Ellis presented recently to OEIB and connected with Hilda Rosselli. Ms. Rosselli offered more support if needed. ASPIRE is solid now due to evaluation processes that are in place; a wonderful marketing plan and a toolbox that has some amazing tools and all this was impressive to Dr. McEwen of OEIB. ASPIRE is tasked with growing to 145 sites by year end; 295 by end of next biennium. We are working on recruitment strategy. Lori also presented to HECC with Bob in March. Folks are understanding that ASPIRE words and we are not missing any opportunities to get out and present our program.

The scholarship application deadline was extended to March 7th due to issues with the system being overloaded. Ms. Nunenkamp reported that a number of parents have called about why they can't complete the application. We reiterate it's the student who is to apply and do the work. This is something we ought to talk about and she would like the Commission to think about and give her feedback but she suggested emphasizing that the students must do the work.

Ms. Nunenkamp commented on how wonderful staff has been with less than gracious callers. There were 12,400 applications submitted. The current challenge is we need to meet our deadlines. We are

having difficulty with the new system talking to the old database; we have staff scrambling and they have put together the first packet for Ford. The entire family of OSAC is involved in this process of meeting deadlines.

Commissioner Howard asked to see at next meeting a plan/time table for correcting problems we see right now that will take place over the next year so we know these things are corrected and we will meet deadlines. Ms. Nunenkamp asked for 2 months to come back with plan/timelines due to workload. It was agreed Ms. Nunenkamp will bring timeline/plan in May.

Chair Weeks stated he hopes we don't get in this spot again where we don't seem to know what kind of problems we have. He knows we have two guys breaking their backs but the reality is we can't afford to have this happen again. We need to deconstruct the application, see where can make it better, and bring in the expertise.

Bob Brew said it is no secret we entered into this with no plan or deliverables and this is no way to run an army. We can't stop and commence planning now; we have to go forward, get through this process and then it will be critical to the process to debrief and look at what we've created and how we can improve it going forward.

Chair Weeks stated the hard part is we hear we are 'doing fine, got it all figured out' and then 'oh, we have problems'. We really don't have any idea where we are. If we need help getting this resolved, let's spend the money; our partners will not tolerate this again next year. Mr. Brew stated that this was embarrassing for him to receive commitments and then pass those along to the partners and then have to say we're sorry we haven't been able to deliver. Commissioner Howard reported that he has had three conversations with one of our partners and there is a lot of concern but what he has heard is a commitment to stay with us. There was additional conversation about potential resources/vendors and timing. Chair Weeks reported that we cannot make the same mistakes twice because it is likely that are partners will only forgive once.

Ms. Nunenkamp provided an update on new OSAC scholarships – four new OSAC scholarships and one new scholarship with OCF. The Oregon Spirit Scholarship criteria has been finalized and now the committee is looking for funding sources. The Attorney General is searching for scholarships that could benefit from utilizing OSAC's scholarship application.

Chair Weeks asked if there are any deadlines threatened right now. Ms. Nunenkamp replied yes, we didn't finish a form needed last night; waiting to hear from staff as it's been committed to be done before the end of the day today. Ms. Nunenkamp advised every deadline is threatened right now as we try to get programmers to understand the intricacies of what is required in order for staff and partners to move forward. Additional conversation was had about bringing in expertise to assist with the programming. It was agreed Bob Brew will consult with DAS to see if they have resources in house that might help with programming.

INTERNAL AUDIT PRESENTATION

Moss Adams representatives presented the presentation entitled Internal Audit Update. This presentation was available in meeting packet.

Chair Weeks asked what are the highest risks; what steps have we taken or have not taken to correct? Moss Adams reps committed to sending to the Commission a status log via email today.

Colin Wallace suggested there may be vulnerability surrounding queries with the new app and old database –there is a possibility that during specialized queries, there may be applicants included that are not eligible; eligible applicants who are not included. This is due to database not pulling the correct information. Bob Brew stated they have requested in the 13-15 budget, money to scope out development of a new database; this audit will be very valuable in determining what the new system needs and capabilities that currently exist.

Mr. Wallace asked for direction/guidance where they can best serve OSAC; where can they provide valuable 3rd party input. He stated the forefront should be ensuring data integrity is upheld and there is no risk associated with recent changes. They will include Commissioners in distribution/updates as structure is further developed. Management voiced support of this much needed process. Commissioner Holland asked if level of partner satisfaction is being gauged for queries. Are they getting back what they need? Mr. Wallace agreed they can incorporate that into the process to get feedback to make sure they are getting what they need/want out of the process.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Brent Wilder at OAICU reported that he had shared some of the Oregon Opportunity Grant research findings with Bob Brew. Mr. Brew reported that the research had to do with the completion rates of OOG recipients of OAICU students. This information was provided to the Ways and Means sub-committee.

OTHER BUSINESS AND ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Melton called for other business to come before the commission at this time. There being no further business, Vice Chair Melton moved to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 11:09 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved by Commission at Meeting 429 - April 26, 2013

Gary Weeks, Chair
