

AOF Board Minutes, March 15, 2014

Present: Kemble Yates, Jacqueline Arante, Greg Monahan, Alan Bakalinsky, and Christian Vukasovich. Chris Parta from C&E Systems was also present; Kristen Leonard joined us a little later. We also welcomed guests DeAnna Timmerman (from Eastern Oregon University) and Gina Psaki, from University of Oregon.

Meeting was called to order at 10:10 by Acting President Alan Bakalinski.

Lobbyist Report (CP)

Chris recapped the February session, and shared the C&E Legislative Report for AOF.

The session will probably be noted as much for what *didn't* pass, but some bills did. We discussed HB 4018 relating to TRU's governance. It moved the deadline up to this year for the TRU institutions to establish their new governance structure, and gives a "third path" as well. The third path relates to if a TRU's proposal is neither rejected or accepted by the OUS Board, but allows a kind of "conditional approval" route as well. The bill also establishes a community college task force to help the community colleges' transition into/under the HECC. And the bill also sets up a successor to the OUS "bank" to help the institutions with the financial functions this bank has previously fulfilled.

It does appear that a version of the Provosts' Council will continue, and report to the HECC. What teeth it will have (or that HECC will enforce) remains pretty tenuous at this time.

HB 4076 did ultimately die in committee. This bill would have mandated the TRU's to pilot a fixed cost Bachelor's Degree.

SB 1525, the Senate's vehicle for higher education, complements HB 4018. It adds that HECC can oversee SARA (State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements) – which allows administration of distance education. It also mandates that faculty and staff board members must recuse themselves from matters that directly relate to collective bargaining/salary issues.

The next big calendar item for Oregon politics is the May 20 primary.

Chris then reported on the March 4 OUS meeting at which each TRU made their presentation on their preferred governance models, which for them was unanimously the "hybrid model" with individual boards and a Presidents Council. A follow-up meeting on March 31 will result in final decisions on the governance proposals.

Legislator Visitors: Rep. Barbara Smith-Warner and Sen. Michael Dembrow

Rep. Barbara Smith-Warner joined us at 11 AM, who replaced Rep. Michael Dembrow when he moved to the Senate. Barbara was accompanied her legislative aide, Marissa Johnson. Barbara previously worked with Sen. Barbara Boxer in CA and Sen. Ron Wyden in Oregon. She is a very enthusiastic advocate for about public education. She is running for the seat, and essentially only faces a primary challenge because there is no Republican running in the fall.

We asked the legislators about their thoughts on family tuition benefit, which has uncertainty in the new post-OUS era. The group speculated that this might get folded into the ultimate resolution to Shared Services.

Sen. Dembrow talked about the recent legislative session and how he sees things going forward. He opined that the Presidents of the TRUs did a very good job of preparing and presenting the hybrid model; shared services is still a key issue. He did remind us that he has continually asked them (the Presidents) that he would like to

know how they had consulted with the campus community, and especially the faculty. The financial troubles of SOU and EOU actually drove the “third path” creation – to ensure from the state’s point of view, that the model is financially viable. He tactfully pointed out that he believes that affiliation is still a possible solution for (especially) SOU and EOU. For instance, EOU pursuing an individual board with both their President and Provost leaving is problematic. He also believes that Governor Kitzhaber favors affiliation for at least SOU and EOU. Dembrow also opined that teaching (more than research) is more the focus right now of the higher educational-engaged legislators.

A large share of the OUS Board’s budget was taken away from the OUS in the February session, and most of its budget has been put under the control of the Emergency Board (which is essentially the Ways & Means Committee).

Sen. Dembrow also recommended to us going forward: ask if the focus of our questions should be institution-only, four-year institution-only, or could include community colleges too. The latter cases will carry more traction in the Legislature, he implied.

He talked a bit of the Senate dysfunction – it was technically 16-14 Democrat, but it was still difficult to get legislation through. He hopes that Democrats can pick up at least one more seat.

Another piece of advice to us as individuals and as an organization: engage with your boards (and don’t just depend on the faculty reps).

General Business

Minutes from our February 1 meeting were approved as amended.

We also discussed the Treasurer’s report, and it was approved.

OFFAC

Motion: That we donate \$200 to the campaign of to the Sara Gelser campaign. Passed.

Campus Reports

PSU (JA): The faculty has authorized the union to strike, if a settlement is not reached. Administration’s current offer is 2% (not retroactive) + 2 %. In return, they want a lot of control over all other working conditions. There’s an alternative offer which takes away less, but is then 1.5% + 1.5%. A strike would occur as early as April 3. There’s a tricky issue with the AFT part-time faculty – they can’t legally NOT cross the picket line. Would they “absorb” the teaching load? It seems like the overall strategy of the PSU administration is to drastically reduce the fraction of the faculty on the tenure-track.

AOF will draft a position statement of support for the PSU faculty& get it sent out widely.

Other campus reports will be e-mailed by members for inclusion as an addendum to our minutes.

Web Site

Kemble announced that the new web site is nearly ready. He will send all of the board members a link so they can give him final feedback, and get it “live” asap.

AAUP Report

We still intend to couple the AOF annual meeting with the annual AAUP-Oregon meeting, slated for April 26 at LaSelle Conference Center at OSU. AAUP is getting itself organized, including recruiting some of the private universities. They are looking for ideas for breakout sessions.

Next Meeting

Scheduled for April 26, 2014.