

MEETING #393
OREGON STUDENT ASSISTANCE COMMISSION
Friday, February 26, 2010

Conference Call

COMMISSIONERS

Philip Shilts, Vice Chair
Cap Sharples
Bridget Burns
Bart Howard
Glenda Melton
Alethia Miller

STAFF

Dennis Johnson, Executive Director
Beverly Boyd, Executive Assistant
Susan Degen, Opportunity Grant Administrator
Alan Contreras, ODA Administrator
Vicki Merkel, Scholarship and Access Program Director
Carrie Matsushita, Marketing and Development
Anna Houpt, Fiscal Services – Team Lead
Peggy Cooksey, Scholarship Portfolio Coordinator
Cheryl Connolly, Operations Assistant

GUESTS

Gary Andeen, OICA
Margie Lowe, Governor's Office
Bob Kieran, Oregon University System
John Wykoff, Oregon Community College Assoc.
Teresa Greene, Oregon Department of Education

Emily McClain, Oregon Student Association
Brett Rowlett, Lane Community College
Cherie Honnell, OHSU
Tracy Reisinger, Marylhurst University

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Philip Shilts presided for Commission Chair Brian Lemos, who was unable to attend. Commissioner Shilts called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. Having a quorum, the meeting proceeded.

COMMISSION CHAIR'S REPORT

Commissioner Lemos was absent and had not sent a report.

ODA ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Program Activity

Alan Contreras stated that Teresa Greene will be joining the meeting as soon as she was available to discuss the potential merger between Office of Degree Authorization and the Oregon Department of Education. Program reviews are on schedule with the exception of one school which Carolyn Sinclair is currently in the process of reviewing. Additional reviews are expected mid-March thru the spring. Mr. Contreras had no new diploma mill cases to report. The Secretary of State has reported an incumbent public official in Oregon that has submitted a fake degree as part of his election materials, this is a felony offense. Currently this issue is not an active ODA case but it will be in the future.

Mr. Contreras has proposed the use of a telecommuting agreement between ODA and himself, the agreement will allow him to work from a remote location. The Commissioners' concerns about this agreement are: the morale of other OSAC and ODE employees that are not allowed to work from home, the expense, if any, incurred by the long distance communication, whom would take on the duty of being Mr. Contreras's direct report, and the impact on his replacement when he retires. Commissioner Bridget Burns stated that studies have confirmed that many people work more efficiently from home. Mr. Johnson verified that a number of individuals on the OSAC staff work remotely from Klamath Falls,

Portland and Coos Bay and are very successful. Mr. Contreras responded that he will be absorbing all of the travel expense to attend the Commission meetings and the phone number will remain an 800 number adding no expense. Mr. Johnson has agreed, if approved by the Commissioners, to be Mr. Contreras's direct report. Mr. Contreras would like to put his home on the market in April and plans to be relocated by early summer. Commissioner Howard and Margie Lowe of the Governor's Office would like to have legal counsel consulted to ensure the Commission can delegate their oversight responsibility for Mr. Contreras to Mr. Johnson. The Commission will vote on the telecommuting agreement at the next Commission meeting.

Merger Update with Teresa Greene

Department of Education, Private Career Schools Licensing Director Teresa Greene has had several conversations with Mr. Contreras on the subject of a merger between ODA and the ODE. The merger will unify the post secondary functions of the state into one office. The concept of the merger is being reviewed by Ms. Greene's direct supervisor and she is open to continuing this process. The concerns for completing the merger are the possible expenses for legal services, procurement expense, and HR services. Alan responded that all of the side effects of the merger would not be immediately obvious, expenses to the budget, HR and legal services would be conceivable. Ms. Greene stated that the merger could take place between the summer of 2011 and January 2012, which is the timeframe for a standard bill to take effect after a legislative session. Gary Andeen would like to know if the degree granting schools have been surveyed about how they feel about the merger. Mr. Contreras stated that he has not done a survey but that one could be done. His successor would be reporting to Ms. Greene within ODE, the loss of the ODA to OSAC would include budgeting and staffing, but would actually simplify things for OSAC, as ODA is not a part of OSAC's revenue strings. In the past Mr. Contreras had been a lead investigator in diploma mills, but as 11 other states have added structure with these issues, Oregon no longer needs be the national leader in investigating diploma mills.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Quarterly Budget Report

Anna Houpt, OSAC Fiscal Services, stated that the statewide month-end closing is two weeks after the end of the month, therefore resulting in delayed reporting. Ms. Houpt referred to the handout for the period fiscal report. The Lottery fund received an unexpected \$4.5 million deposit due to Senate Bill #5534 and #496 which changed some of the structure of the Lottery funds. Previously OSAC only received declared earnings on the Oregon Growth Account and a portion of the interest on the Education Stability Fund (ESF), these amounts vary each month. The earnings on the ESF are down 31 percent, this does mean fewer funds are available. At some point in the future when the economy improves the earnings on the ESF could make the Lottery Fund payment look small.

Legislative Concepts: Preliminary Ideas

Looking ahead to the 2011 Legislative session OSAC will be submitting concepts as early as April, prior to submission these concepts will need to be approved by the Commissioners. The four specific areas are (1) The Oregon Opportunity Grant; March 5th the Steering Committee will be meeting at OSAC to look at recommendations for awarding and announcements for the 2010-11 academic year. (2) Budget proposal for ASPIRE, which includes funding from schools, the general fund, foundations, and corporations. OSAC has developed new tools such as eASPIRE and it is time to look at where the program is now and what the future plans are for the program. (3) Support for former foster youth and efforts aimed at helping homeless youth. The White paper is available on line from the last legislative session. (4) ODA and ODE merger, statutory recommendations would come from ODE but OSAC may want to have some alternative statutory issues. The legislative concepts are due April 9th; therefore the ideas need to be ready for approval at the Commission meeting in March.

Former Foster Youth/Homeless Proposal

OSAC is hosting a group next week that was initiated by a University of Oregon former foster youth, she is interested in mentoring. There is potential to expand the task force, Linn Benton had a bill in the last senate session to form a state wide task force. The homeless youth is a new part of the proposal; these students are also lacking family support. Peggy Cooksey reported that the funding is not enough for the demand; OSAC funding is less than the federal level. Peggy has established contacts on several campuses that will produce additional contacts and resources. Gary Andean would like to join the task force. ASPIRE will reformulate an active advisory group task force and encourage the Commissioners to join.

Scholarship Application Update

OSAC has received 7,387 submitted applications as of this morning; during the week of the Early Bird deadline we received 3750 applications. The reviewing process is up to date and the work-study students have turned out to be the ideal review team. This year we had only several Early Bird Scholarships available, more funding is needed. Transmitting data from the Career Information System into the eApp is new; it will make the application process easier to fill out for future students.

ASPIRE Funding Update

ASPIRE received \$49,500 for partnership grants from the Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) Education Committee. These funds allowed all of the sites that wanted partnership grants to receive them. OCF has committed to continuing their support for ASPIRE. Texas has also invited ASPIRE to reapply; last year the grant was \$75,000 this year OSAC is requesting additional funds. More information will be available next week on The Race to the Top Grant. ASPIRE is running a small application process for additional bricks and mortar sites.

FASFA Friday

FASFA Friday is a project within College Goal Oregon, which is supported through the YMCA and funded by Lumina. The College Goal Oregon day was successful; it was a busy day for the OSAC staff at Lane Community College. Online training will be taking place for the next four months; the first training is today February 26, at 2:00 p.m. Blue Mountain Community College has signed up for this training.

Oregon Opportunity Grant Issues

The FASFA filing chart shows the Eligible OOG Applicants received through mid-February. Over 43,000 OOG disbursements were made for fall term. At midnight, the Winter Quarter Disbursement report will be complete; it will show student retention from fall to winter. The revised timeline for 2010-11 Oregon Opportunity Grant Awarding displays the current available information. OSAC received \$14.7 million in the last legislative session which will allow the cuts from the second semester and spring quarter to be revised. The students that did not attend in the fall, but attended class in the spring will not be eligible for the revised award amount. OSAC will be requesting up to \$5 million at the Emergency Board meeting, any funding that is not covered this year will come out of next year's awarding amount. The exact amount will be presented at the next Commission meeting. Up to \$5 million dollars can be requested at the September Emergency Board meeting, the request will have to be submitted by late summer. This fund is linked to the same fund for forest fire fighting; therefore if there is a heavy fire season the funds will not be available. The Commission will need to take action in April for the May E-Board meeting.

The Steering Committee will be reviewing the plans for 2010-11 awarding. The aggregate amount of funding will be portioned by sector, 48 percent to community colleges, 41 percent for the OUS sector and 11 percent for the independent colleges sector. Awards will be made until the funding is depleted, in the fall when it is determined what funds were not used by the students, the remaining funds will then be released for additional awards, and this will ensure that no overfunding occurs. The issues to be determined by the Steering Committee include how the waiting list will be announced, who will be told and how students can move from one sector to another. At the March Commission meeting feedback from the Steering Committee and progression of the awarding will be presented.

Over the next few months research results will be available on two subjects, the first is part time students and the second is the characteristics of high need students. The research will look for information on which students are available for full awards, what characteristics they share, what plans do they have, and where do they attend school.

Internal Audit Reports

The Internal Audit Report has been tabled until the Commission meets in person.

TAX CREDITS FOR COLLEGE

Commissioner Sharples was concerned that few people knew about the American Opportunity Credit (AOC). OSAC is making a publicity effort to inform students about the AOC with the creation of Tip Sheet #9 and a Press Release. The IRS did not release the information until January 26th, making it difficult to communicate information to students.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR POSITION DESCRIPTION AND PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Commissioner Shilts is working on updating the Performance Evaluation Survey, a first draft was previously sent to Commissioners. Two separate surveys have been created, one surveying the staff, the other surveying the stakeholders. To help identify differing opinions the stakeholder's survey includes an opportunity to identify which section the stakeholder is from. Commissioner Shilts would like to have the surveys completed within the next two weeks; therefore additional comments would need to be received in the next week. In the future additional research needs to be done to improve the question structure, additional research should include looking at other organizations' surveys.

The Executive Director Position Description has not been reviewed for several years and is in need of an update. An electronic copy of the Executive Director Position Description could not be located; DAS HR will be contacted to see if they have an electronic copy. The hard copy will be scanned as a PDF document next week and emailed to the Commissioners for their review.

Other Business

There being no other business, Commissioner Shilts moved to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

APPROVED AT COMMISSION MEETING #398 MAY 21, 2010

Dennis R. Johnson, Executive Director

Philip Shilts, Vice Chair

Cap Sharples, Commissioner

Bridget Burns, Commissioner

Bart Howard, Commissioner

Glenda Melton, Commissioner

Alethia Miller, Commissioner