

MEETING #407
OREGON STUDENT ASSISTANCE COMMISSION
Friday, March 25, 2011
Oregon Student Assistance Commission
Eugene, OR

COMMISSIONERS

Bart Howard, Chair
Cap Sharples, Vice Chair
Glenda Melton
Alethia Miller
Mike Holland
Gary Weeks (phone)

STAFF

Josette Green, Executive Director
Alan Contreras, ODA Administrator
Susan Degen, Opportunity Grant Administrator
Lorianne Ellis, ASPIRE Team Lead
Peggy Cooksey, Program Analyst

GUESTS

Emma Kallaway, OSA

CALL TO ORDER

Commission Chair Bart Howard called the meeting to order at 9:36 am. Having a quorum present, the meeting proceeded

CHAIR'S/OTHER COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Chair Howard reported that after the last meeting, he and OSAC Executive Director Josette Green met with Department of Administrative Services/Human Resources staff (DAS/HR) regarding an Interim Director appointment for the Office of Degree Authorization Administrator. An offer has been made to Jennifer Diallo and she has agreed to accept the appointment. Chair Howard asked for a motion to approve the appointment. A motion was made by Commissioner Glenda Melton and seconded by Vice-Chair Cap Sharples. Concerning daily reporting, the Commission has felt it would be a good idea for the position to report to Josette rather than the Commission. Chair Howard requested that be put on the next meeting agenda to make it official. Commissioner Mike Holland asked if we need statutory language. Chair Howard said it has been looked into and we don't believe it does, but perhaps we should get an official opinion before the next meeting. Chair Howard asked Alan Contreras who we should ask. Mr. Contreras said he thinks that DAS/HR should be able to answer that rather than the agency having to pay legal counsel. Commissioner Holland asked that we ask not only about supervisory responsibility, but also if the Executive Director would have some authority to add duties and responsibilities to the position. Perhaps this would make it easier at a later date to package the position in an appropriate classification. Chair Howard said that he will make sure to contact Vickie Jorgenson in DAS/HR. At a later point in the meeting, the vote was called by Chair Howard. The vote passed unanimously amongst the six Commissioners present.

Chair Howard said that a letter has been placed in Ms. Green's personnel file as a result of the quarterly evaluation process and that those Commissioners who haven't received a copy yet will receive a hard copy as he doesn't feel it is appropriate to send the letter by e-mail.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Update: Ms. Green reported that SB 242 has been amended to allow OSAC to retain the same governance as we currently have. The amendment is still in draft form. Although we would maintain our current commission structure, the agency name would change to the Oregon Student Access Council. "Access" better defines our agency mission. "Council" would be necessary because we would be part of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) and a commission reporting to a commission wouldn't make sense. The amendment suggests that OSAC staff the HECC. Ms. Green says she has given feedback regarding that item and that it would take additional staffing at the agency to fulfill that role. Commissioner Holland said that adding duties to OSAC staff would raise a real problem. Ms. Green said she has asked that it be deleted. Commissioner Holland said that before we request it be deleted, we should consider whether staffing the HECC would be an advantage within the HECC?

Commissioner Gary Weeks asked who OSAC's Executive Director would report to. Ms. Green said the ED would report to the newly named "Council" who would in turn report to the HECC. Commissioner Weeks asked if the "Council" would have to be reappointed, or would continue with existing members. Ms. Green said she doesn't think that issue has been addressed at this point, but she will check.

Vice-Chair Sharples asked if he understands correctly that currently in the bill, there is an Executive Director position specifically named for the HECC, but no additional staff. That being the case, it would seem to him that OSAC staff will definitely be taking on additional work. This could shift work away from serving students, which is what we are here for.

Chair Howard summed up that there are two questions: Commissioner Week's question about clarifying the continuance or re-appointment of Council members, and Vice-Chair Sharples' question regarding HECC staffing. Chair Howard said that Emma Kallaway, Oregon Student Association (OSA) has presented testimony regarding the staff. Commissioner Weeks asked what Senator Hass' opinion regarding these issues has been. Ms. Green said she can't address his opinion at this time. She asked Senator Hass the question regarding staff prior to the amendments being made, but did not get an answer. Commissioner Weeks asked if we know when the bill will go to the floor. Ms. Green said she doesn't have that answer yet. Ms. Kallaway said that because there isn't a fiscal yet on this bill, it will be some weeks before it goes to the floor.

Chair Howard asked that Ms. Green rally the Commissioners to be contacting Senator Hass to discuss these issues. Ms. Green said it is unclear to her who is behind the origination of the amendment drafts. Commissioner Holland asked who the Ways and Means co-chairs are. Ms. Green replied Senator Monroe, Representative Komp, and Representative Sprenger are co-chairs of the Ways and Means Education Subcommittee and Representative Dembrow is Vice Co-Chair. Commissioner Holland said that we need to work through the leadership of Ways and Means at this point because it has moved passed the Senate Education Committee.

Commissioner Alethia Miller asked if there would still be Student Commissioners as members of the proposed Council. Ms. Green said that the composition would remain the same; it hasn't been addressed as part of the amendments. Representative Dembrow has said it should remain the same.

Commissioner Weeks asked for the most recent copy of the amendments. Ms. Green said she has draft copies and will get them out after today's meeting.

The third element of SB 242 is to move ODA out of OSAC and have it report directly to the HECC. This would make the previous conversation regarding having the ODA Administrator report to OSAC Executive Director instead of the Commission moot.

House Bill 2116 has been withdrawn. Ms. Green has also attended a hearing on HB 2732; to receive a high school diploma the student must also complete an application for some type of internship or postsecondary education. Ms. Green said she doesn't have a feel for it as there are strong opinions on both sides. The bill is sponsored by Senator Hass and Representative Reed. SB 343 was introduced by the independent colleges asking for a different calculation in the Shared Responsibility Model. Ms. Susan Degen testified on that bill yesterday. Ms. Green has also been part of a group working on a bill regarding tuition waivers for foster youth.

Ms. Green reported that the interview process for Director of Scholarships and Access is moving along. Interviews have gone through two rounds and Ms. Green hopes to make an offer next week.

Staffing updates: Beverly Boyd will return from medical leave next week and thank you to Allison Jacobi for filling in as a temporary employee in Bev's absence. Ditte Lokon of IT has accepted a new position and has left the agency.

Internal Audit, by April 1st, all ten item issues will be completed. The next internal audit, a finance audit approved by the Commissioners in January, will start the week of April 4.

Ways and Means Presentation: OSAC's presentation before the Joint Ways and Means Committee took place March 7th and 8th and was well received. Ms. Green presented an abbreviated version of the presentation to the Commissioners. She stressed agency goals including increasing private scholarships, increasing ASPIRE sites and creating stable funding, increasing the OOG to 25% of eligible applicants, utilizing technology for efficiency and expanded customer service, and creating and implementing performance goals that measure the effectiveness of the agency.

Ms. Green discussed Performance Measures in more detail. Although the agency has legislatively mandated Key Performance Measures, the agency needs to determine what accurately measures what the agency does and start those measurements beginning July 1, 2011. These include increasing the number of awards and total number of scholarships, the turnaround for award, adhering to a strategic timeline of OOG administration, and increasing students entering postsecondary education after ASPIRE. There was also a slide regarding how budget reductions would affect our KPM's.

The commissioners requested the full version of the presentation along with the Bright Ideas be sent to them and Ms. Green agreed to do so at the conclusion of the meeting.

ODA ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Program Administrator Alan Contreras reported that he has calculated that he has made 120-130 ODA Administrator Reports to the Commission in his 12 years in the position. Mr. Contreras said he wanted to make note that the Ways and Means members were very impressed by Ms. Green's listing of the staff's Bright Ideas (cost-saving measures).

Regarding SB 242, Mr. Contreras said that regarding ODA, that the program and its staff will still need accounting and IT support from somewhere which isn't addressed in the current bill.

Regarding HB 2117 which was originally the vehicle for a merger with the DOE's Career Schools section, the amendment will remove the merger and put into the bill the one surviving provision-that ODA is required to issue licenses to schools that meet the federal regulations. There is a conflict between HB 2117 and SB 242. HB 2117 is scheduled for a work session next Tuesday, and the only issue they are discussing is removal of the provision to move reporting of the ODA Director from the Commission to OSAC's Executive Director.

Mr. Contreras said that next week as he exits his position, he will send a brief letter with an update of where the program is. He said that he has been able to do more program reviews than expected and more than 20 have been completed in the past two weeks, catching them up through the end of 2010.

Mr. Contreras gave a brief review of the written report provided to the Commissioners. Due to the Departure of Ditte Lokon the web portal project is on hold until a new IT staff member is hired. Chair Howard asked if enough work has been completed for a new programmer to sit down and start programming immediately. Mr. Contreras said that Jennifer Diallo has been working on it, but he doesn't believe the process was completed to the stage of being able to actually do the programming.

Mr. Contreras thanked the Commissioners for the opportunity he has had in the past 12 years as the ODA Administrator. Chair Howard thanked Mr. Contreras for his work. Mr. Contreras also thanked Ms. Green for the work they have been able to do together since she came to OSAC. Vice Chair Sharples thanked Mr. Contreras for helping Oregon's students who are earning legitimate degrees by working to discredit diploma mills and provide accreditation to legitimate programs. Commissioner Weeks also thanked Mr. Contreras for all of his work.

SCHOLARSHIP AND ACCESS PROGRAMS

Lori Ellis, Team Lead of the ASPIRE and Outreach Programs, gave an update about private scholarships. There were 10,862 good applications (the number may increase as appeals are being reviewed) which is basically the same number as last year. Staff is starting the process of generating eligibility lists. Ford programs are first priority, and eligibility lists will continue to be run through June. We are on target.

Ms. Ellis introduced the ASPIRE staff members and each gave a brief summary of what they do- Gretchen Beckner-Portland Region Supervisor, Becky Wilson-Mazama Region Supervisor, Gary Campbell-Willamette Region Supervisor, Holli Kalaleh -College Access Challenge Grant Recruitment, Gayle Yamasaki, CACG Recruitment and Reporting, and Steve Machado-E-ASPIRE and Middle School Mentoring Supervisor, and Kristen Vreeland-clerical support.

OREGON OPPORTUNITY GRANT (OOG)

Update: Opportunity Grant Administrator Susan Degen said she realized while preparing testimony for some hearings regarding items that affect the Oregon Opportunity Grant that the OOG is coming up on its 40th year of existence, having been established in 1971 (one year earlier than the Federal Pell Grant established in 1972).

Awarding Funding: Next week, OSAC will be sending out the spring quarter OOG advances to the schools. We estimate total spring term awards at \$3.4 million. Last year we sent a partial advance at the

start of spring term, and reconciled additional funds needed to be sent to the schools during the summer. That worked well and we will do that again. We are on target to spend about \$18 million which includes the OUS contribution.

Ms. Degen said that Ms. Green has made it clear to legislators that schools need to know what they can expect to receive in OOG because they are preparing financial aid packages for students now. The Governor's Office recommended \$46 million for 2011-12 and this was discussed with the chairs of the Ways and Means Committee as well as presented to the entire Ways and Means Education Subcommittee with no objections from any legislature. First award lists were posted on March 14th, on track with our target of posting awards by mid-March. We used a combination of historical data, federal data, and term- to-term retention rates. First lists show we have about 39,000 awards authorized (in response to a question from Vice Chair Sharples if that represents \$46 million in expenditures, Ms. Degen and Ms. Green said they are comfortable with the modeling and will make our goal to not over spend).

We will be scheduling a meeting with the Advisory Group in the next month or so to discuss coming year strategies.

Roll-Out of New Agency Website

Thomas Ridder, a staff member of OSAC's Information Technology team said that OSAC recently hired an outside firm (Insite Web Publishing) to evaluate our existing websites and advise us on a new website design. We will have a new domain name OregonStudentAid.gov. Mr. Ridder showed the oldest archived OSAC website from 2000 and the history of modifications made since then.

The new website will unify all programs and previous websites (OSAC, Get College Funds, ODA, ASPIRE, College Goal Oregon, and the College is Possible initiative) under www.OregonStudentAid.gov. Mr. Ridder displayed some of the pages. Many items are still under construction.

Commissioner Holland asked if we will have a page of links to outside resources that perhaps should be linked because of the website, Oregon Student Aid. Aren't we inviting people to come to our site to look for aid resources that we aren't responsible for by using that name? Vice Chair Sharples said that the ASPIRE page has an amazing number of links to outside aid sources already. Mr. Ridder said that the discussion actually brings up a topic that Ms. Green has already championed providing resource information to other programs. All existing web pages have been assigned to either a staff member or team leader to check and update content. Timelines and policy will be developed.

The new website will be released in a staged, 3 tier pattern. Most publicized and heavily trafficked pages will roll out on April 1st. Ms. Green said this is part of our plan to increase credibility of the agency.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Emma Kallaway gave an update on SB 742, Tuition Equity for undocumented residents. The bill has already passed the Senate Education Committee by a 5 to 4 vote. The OSA sees this as a revenue positive bill that seems to be moving forward even in the current economic and political climate. There are already a few more conservative, states that have similar program in place. The bill provides the opportunity for undocumented residents to pay in-state tuition, but doesn't allow for financial aid.

Effectively, it brings money into the school while allowing undocumented residents to receive an education.

Ms. Green said that the OSA has testified on OSAC's governance needs on SB 242 and she thanks them for their work and good working relationship.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Commissioner Holland made the motion to approve meeting minutes #406 February 25, 2011. Commissioner Melton seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously by the five Commissioners in attendance (Commissioner Weeks was no longer in attendance at that time).

OTHER BUSINESS AND ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:36 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bart Howard, Chair