

MEETING #435
OREGON STUDENT ACCESS COMMISSION
Friday, January 17, 2014
Oregon Student Access Commission
State Capitol Building
Salem, OR

COMMISSIONERS

Glenda Melton
Merriam Weatherhead (phone)
Shawn Fincher
Bart Howard
Gary Weeks

STAFF

Bob Brew, Interim Executive Director
Vic Nunenkamp, Chief Operating Officer
Lora Carson, Budget and Finance Manager
Lacie Morgan, Executive Assistant
Susan Degen, OOG Administrator

GUESTS

Susie Hosie, DAS/EHRS
Tricia Tate, The Ford Family Foundation (phone)
Denise Callahan, The Ford Family Foundation (phone)
Larry Large, The Alliance (phone)
Emma Kallaway, Oregon Student Association

CALL TO ORDER

Commission Chair Gary Weeks called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Having a quorum present, the meeting proceeded.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Chair Weeks called for a motion to approve the minutes from meeting #434. Commissioner Fincher moved to approve the minutes from meeting #434. Commissioner Melton seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING COMMISSION UPDATE

Chair Weeks reported that Tim Nesbitt, Chair of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, was unable to attend due to a schedule conflict. Bob Brew stated Mr. Nesbitt is interested in attending the next meeting. Chair Weeks stated, in light of Mr. Nesbitt's absence, discussion would focus on the work of the HECC Financial Aid Work Group. Chair Weeks stated this group is looking at the current grant program and tasked with developing future program recommendations by mid-March, which will include input via survey responses from various financial aid officers. Chair Weeks shared survey question samples pertaining to eligibility determination criteria, access, and other related considerations.

Mr. Brew expressed interest in seeing the survey and commented on the work group's desire to be all things to all people, without the funds to do so. Mr. Brew reported he is working on a survey of the committee members to create a series of forced, sometimes difficult choices in order to identify where the group's members agree or disagree, and flesh out details for moving forward.

Larry Large commented on the process, stating Mr. Brew captured very well the idea that the committee consists of strong, high-minded people who are trying to find balance between access and degree attainment, in keeping with the state's goal of 40/40/20. Mr. Large stated the response thus far from financial aid directors has been quite valuable and greater than expected.

Chair Weeks reported that the work group is exploring methods for guaranteeing award continuance for those who meet requirements in order increase completion and the group's final report and recommendation is due mid-March.

Commissioner Howard asked Mr. Brew if certain data/research is required for this report and if the agency able to provide it. Mr. Brew confirmed data has been requested and production is quite challenging due to IT staff's focus on Scholarship and Opportunity Grant application processing currently in progress.

Commissioner Howard asked Mr. Brew if the work group understands the agency is doing their best with resources that are available. Mr. Brew stated the agency to date has done a good job of producing requested data. Data pertaining to continuing students is in the queue but is not quite complete.

CHAIR'S/COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Chair Weeks reported a search is underway to fill the Degree Granting director position. The interview panel will meet January 30, 2014 and provide recommendations for filling the position thereafter.

Commissioner Howard asked if the report means Jennifer Diallo left the position. Chair Weeks confirmed the position being filled is the one previously held by Ms. Diallo. Mr. Brew commented the prior position within the Office of Degree Authorization has been combined with another and is now known as the Degree Granting position.

OREGON OPPORTUNITY GRANT and LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Susan Degen, Oregon Opportunity Grant Administrator, provided a handout of current legislative concepts and noted two concepts being monitored:

- No. 61: Expand eligibility for scholarships for dependent children of deceased and disabled public safety officers program to volunteer firefighters and reserve sheriffs and police officers. DDPSO awards are currently paid out of the OOG Fund.
- No. 55: Directs Higher Education Coordinating Commission to examine the viability of allowing students who graduated from high school Oregon to attend community college for specified period without paying tuition and fees at community college by establishing Task Force on Community College Affordability.

Chair Weeks asked about legislative concept No. 194. Emma Kallaway reported the concept would prohibit postsecondary institutions from entering into contracts with an outside student financial aid management company unless certain requirements are met. The goal is to reduce/eliminate hidden/exorbitant fees charged to Oregon students for accessing/using their funds.

Ms. Degen continued her update reporting on OSAC's recent e-mail communication to students remind them to file a FAFSA for 2014-15 before the February 1, 2014, OOG deadline. This resulted in a slight uptick in FAFSAs filed by community college students. IT also reported increased activity on the OSAC website/application following the reminder e-mail, which included information about the OSAC Scholarship App. Ms. Degen reported fall OOG disbursements of \$21.5 to more than 34,000 recipients, which is a slight increase from the prior year. Additionally, OSAC recently began downloading 2014-15 FAFSAs; 41,000 receive are for undergraduates. Approximately 31,000 of the undergraduates could be OOG eligible.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Lora Carson, Budget and Finance Manager, presented the Financial Report stating finances look good. Overall, the agency is at 22.8% and is on target.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Bob Brew, Interim Executive Director, provided an update of recent events and upcoming projects:

- Ben Cannon recently visited with OSAC staff
- Scholarship application continues to go well with record number of applicants
- Suggest bringing on additional staff to replace FAM system rather than purchasing off the shelf
- Increased FAFSA completion to be of focus and of great importance to Tim Nesbitt
- Mr. Brew will staff subcommittee to develop Pay if Forward pilot project

Discussion followed regarding FAFSA dollars potentially being left on the table and reasons why.

Larry Large of The Alliance commented on an often overlooked dependent clause that says if the commission finds it's a good idea, then they will propose a pilot program and asked Mr. Brew if he has a sense of the subcommittee's view on deciding if it's a good idea. Mr. Brew stated the legislation was written with wiggle room and he will know more after the first subcommittee meeting.

- The Ford Family Foundation 1-year contract finalized
- Finalized contract with Moss Adams for internal auditing for remainder of fiscal year
- Limited duration Accounting Technician II position recently filled
- 2% holdback of general funds that reduced O.O.G. by \$2 Million last session may be released

SCHOLARSHIP AND ACCESS PROGRAMS

Vic Nunenkamp, Chief Operating Officer, reported scholarship application total to date of 17,187, which is quite close to agency banner year (2012) total of 18,303. Training is underway of 24 work study students in preparation for the early bird review. Early bird review begins the Tuesday following the MLK holiday.

Commissioner Howard asked how the agency stands in the number of early bird scholarships compared to the prior year. Ms. Nunenkamp stated the numbers are the same due to a wonderful donation of \$7,500 from ECMC, as well as contributions from The Ford Family Foundation. The agency is very appreciative of these contributions.

Ms. Nunenkamp reported Carrie Matsushita has agreed to perform some duties relating to donor development in light of Joyce Berman's departure from the agency. Carrie will receive incoming calls pertaining to donor development but will not solicit new, potential donors. She has secured one scholarship from start to finish, is doing a great job, and has revised messaging and communication materials used for donor development.

Ms. Nunenkamp reviewed the scholarship variety handout provided in the packet which includes:

- 73 scholarships that do not require financial need
- 291 scholarships that allow attendance outside of Oregon
- 95 scholarships that award graduate students; 76 of these do not have GPA requirements

Chair Weeks asked for an update on the Oregon Spirit scholarship. Mr. Brew stated the suggestions previously provided by Bart Howard need to be reviewed and the next step will be to prepare a legislative concept for the next session. Discussion followed regarding funding and DAS financial offices support. Mr. Brew reported he discussed the concept with Ben Cannon who was intrigued by the idea and is interested in helping identify legislators who are willing to support the idea.

Ms. Nunenkamp continued her update concerning ASPIRE and Outreach program status:

- Access Specialists completed site visits and annual compliance letters are underway
- The ASPIRE Annual Report is in progress; it will be provided as soon as it is completed.
- OSAC Outreach Activities log is complete and handout provided
- College Goal Oregon events are underway with fantastic participation results
- Oregon College Savings Plan presentations are underway
- 3-5 Finding Funds presentations will be delivered January through March

Chair Weeks asked if any time is being spent on the Treasurer's initiative to create bond funded programs. Mr. Brew stated it is not yet clear where the funds would land and the current focus is on getting the constitutional amendment passed and there has been no recent engagement.

Larry Large commented that polling has been favorable among the general electorate.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Emma Kallaway asked if there is a possibility for more OOG dollars this session and should students lobby on behalf of more dollars. Mr. Brew answered he has not heard anything recently but noted the agency would ask for the maximum amount possible. Chair Weeks stated students' support on the issue would be very much appreciated.

OTHER BUSINESS AND ADJOURNMENT

Chair Weeks called for other business to come before the commission at this time. There being no further business, Commissioner Howard moved to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Melton seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 11:14 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved by Commission at Meeting #436 on February 12, 2014

Gary Weeks, Chair
