

**MEETING #436**  
**OREGON STUDENT ACCESS COMMISSION**  
**Wednesday, February 12, 2014**  
**Oregon Student Access Commission**  
**DAS Executive Building**  
**Salem, OR**

**COMMISSIONERS**

Glenda Melton  
Bart Howard  
Gary Weeks  
Shawn Fincher (phone)

**STAFF**

Bob Brew, Interim Executive Director  
Vic Nunenkamp, Chief Operating Officer  
Lora Carson, Budget and Finance Manager  
Vickie Potoski, ASPIRE Technical Assistant

**GUESTS**

Susie Hosie, DAS Human Resources  
Cyndi Smith, DAS Human Resources  
Denise Callahan, The Ford Family Foundation (phone)  
Lindsay Dinino, Oregon Alliance of Independent Colleges and Universities (phone)  
Tricia Tate, The Ford Family Foundation (phone)

**CALL TO ORDER**

Commission Chair Gary Weeks called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m. Having a quorum present, the meeting proceeded.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

Chair Weeks expressed appreciation to Lacie Morgan for producing the meeting minutes timely despite having a very full plate. Chair Weeks called for a motion to approve the minutes from meeting #435. Commissioner Melton moved to approve the minutes from meeting #435. Commissioner Howard seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**CHAIR'S/COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

Chair Weeks reported he and Mr. Brew are part of a financial aid advisory group to redefine the future Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG) program. A survey of committee members is underway. The advisory group will meet several times throughout February and March to review survey results, develop recommendations and submit final report to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission and ultimately to the Oregon Education Investment Board.

Chair Weeks reported interviews were conducted to fill the Degree Authorization program open position. The interview panel submitted recommendations to Ben Cannon who will follow up with credentials and background checks. An announcement is expected within the next couple of weeks.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Bob Brew, Interim Executive Director, deferred to Lora Carson and Vic Nunenkamp to present their reports.

**FINANCIAL UPDATE**

Lora Carson, Budget and Finance Manager, presented the Financial Report provided in the commission meeting packet noting it reflects distribution as of 12/31/13. Operationally the agency is overall at 23.5%, which is still under budget. The bottom line reflects special payments, included for budget analysis purposes. Cash balances are as of 12/31/13, with the OOG split out and everything else left as one entire number and includes numerous programs.

Mr. Brew reported there is potential for increase in lottery funds of approximately 2.7 Million due to possible restoration of a 2% reduction of general fund appropriation last session. Restoration of the 2% is being considered on a case-by-case basis during the next legislative session. The funds are for OOG but it is not new money. Operating expenditure will reduce by an equal amount if the 2% is holdback is restored.

Commissioner Howard asked for clarification about staffing data stating it appears the agency is not fully staffed. Mr. Brew reported the numbers are from the prior biennium approved budget and the agency is slightly over.

Chair Weeks asked how the funds will be managed if the 2% is released. Mr. Brew stated the first window of OOG awarding closed February 1<sup>st</sup> and additional awards will ensue for fall distribution if the 2% is released.

**SCHOLARSHIPS AND ACCESS PROGRAMS**

Vic Nunenkamp, Chief Operating Officer, provided a Scholarships Application Statistics handout. Ms. Nunenkamp reported staff is consumed with the application process and the early bird deadline of 2/15/14 is fast approaching. Staff is on-point and working hard with tremendous focus.

Chair Weeks asked for clarification of the data provided in the handout. Ms. Nunenkamp reviewed the data in detail and discussion followed concerning the review process.

Chair Weeks commented it appeared the agency is up-to-date on all that can be done. Ms. Nunenkamp confirmed.

Mr. Brew stated the agency expects another 10,000 applications over next 10 to 15 days. The application is stable and use of up to 300 users per hour has barely impacted system performance leaving all highly optimistic. Students and partners have reported staff to be very responsive to issues.

Chair Weeks asked Denise Callahan and Tricia Tate what they have heard about process thus far. Ms. Callahan and Ms. Tate reported feedback has been very positive.

Commissioner Howard asked for a comparison of current data to that of prior years. Mr. Brew stated he will provide the requested additional data to all.

Commissioner Melton complimented the report stating the information provided was fantastic.

Ms. Nunenkamp stated staff is to be commended for their spirit and dedication.

Commissioner Howard asked Mr. Brew to commend staff on behalf of the commissioners. Mr. Brew stated he will let staff know how much their work and effort is appreciated.

**ASPIRE and OUTREACH UPDATE**

Ms. Nunenkamp stated ASPIRE is holding firm working with sites and on a grant to expand into colleges. Outreach efforts have included college fairs, college nights, College Goal Oregon, and joint presentations with Oregon College Savings Plan. Ms. Nunenkamp stated the numbers for College Goal Oregon (CGO) alone are impressive with 843 students and parents participating in 15 out of 23 CGO events.

Chair Weeks asked if there is a way to measure current numbers against prior years in order to gauge program use. Ms. Nunenkamp stated they are only just now beginning to collect the data.

Mr. Brew stated the prior director drastically scaled back outreach efforts and the agency is rebuilding the program. Mr. Brew complimented Ms. Nunenkamp and Lori Ellis, as well as other staff who step up and attend outreach events though it is not in their job description. Mr. Brew stated they do this because they believe in the agency mission. The current year is one of rebuilding and moving forward.

Chair Weeks asked if performance measures will be applied to document outreach improvement for target communities. Mr. Brew confirmed and offered more information to come in his upcoming report.

Commissioner Howard asked about a prior report no longer distributed that showed the number of ASPIRE people attending outreach events and applied for OSAC scholarships. Ms. Nunenkamp stated one staff member has been assigned to frame a matrix for outreach performance and she will provide it at the next meeting for review.

Chair Weeks asked about the status of budget for access. Ms. Carson stated it is not an easy thing to identify.

Chair Weeks asked if the budget accounts for access. Ms. Carson stated the detail cross-reference for access has been empty for the past few years and she does not know the history or reason.

Chair Weeks stated there is a need to know the cost of access for the development of performance standards and to judge if good expenditures are being made.

Mr. Brew commented that outreach often gets lost in ASPIRE because Lori Ellis manages both programs and much of what she does serves both programs and he will ask for separation of the data.

Commissioner Howard stated Ms. Ellis is sharp enough to work out the process.

**SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION UPDATE**

Mr. Brew described ongoing weekly meetings conducted to manage the application process:

- Monday meetings regarding the query process
- Tuesday meetings for programmers/IT staff
- Fridays meetings for whole team to plan and prioritize for going forward

Mr. Brew provided an update on the agency's recent proposal to the CIO and legislative fiscal office to apply the "rolling restoration" model to the replacement of the FAM system. They like the idea and the next step is to bring in a professional to write the proposal. \$200,000 is earmarked for the project and might be accessed via emergency board in May to hire a planner to look at the system and develop a business case on how to proceed. The CIO has a list of approved vendors to do this work.

Chair Weeks asked if the agency has the authority to hire a planner and to use the \$200,000 to do the work. Mr. Brew stated the funds can be used specifically for an approved vendor to look at the system and develop a business case.

Chair Weeks asked if DAS is aware of the project. Mr. Brew confirmed stating Bill McGee has been very supportive, as well as the legislative fiscal office.

Chair Weeks asked when the project would get underway. Mr. Brew stated vendor selection would begin the following week.

### **OREGON OPPORTUNITY GRANT UPDATE**

Mr. Brew reported OOG applications are down a few percentage points again this year. The decrease is at the community college level and was anticipated as many previously underemployed people graduated and found jobs.

Commissioner Howard asked if the trend is a bubble moving through the education system. Mr. Brew confirmed as universities are slightly down by about 3%.

Mr. Brew continued stating OOG is on target to award 54.6 Million. Total award will be between 54 and 56 Million depending on the potential restoration of the 2% holdback.

Mr. Brew reported the OOG redesign committee has met six times. There are 14 core principles to guide their work, however some conflict. The survey currently underway will force the group to make decisions about the award process, distribution criteria and practices, and so forth.

Commissioner Howard asked if the shared responsibility model still plays a role in the matrix. Mr. Brew stated it does not particularly due to challenges caused by lack of full funding. Discussion followed.

Commissioner Howard commented that in his opinion the shared responsibility model is cog that doesn't fit.

Mr. Brew stated the model has been abandoned to a certain extent. It does not work particularly well unless.

Discussion followed regarding the process utilized by the committee to date and various meetings though which all members have reached the conclusion that the model is not working.

Commissioner Howard commended the committee on the work done thus far.

Chair Weeks stated the committee expects to have recommendations ready by March.

Mr. Brew reported he will take OSAC staff through a strategic planning process over the next year. Due to many changes and OEIB and HECC initiatives that could impact agency work, he felt it time to review the agency mission and vision, conduct SWOT analysis for the development of goals, priorities and performance measures for Mr. Brew, and for the agency as whole.

Chair Weeks suggested the process will most likely start once a final decision is made regarding the executive director position. Mr. Brew confirmed.

Mr. Brew reported he is staffing a work group established to review the pay-it-forward-pay-it-back concept. The concept allows students to attend college and not pay tuition or fees, and commit to paying a certain percentage of future wages for a period of time. Legislators want a task force to explore development of a pilot project. The task force has met once and staffing is underway.

Mr. Brew reported Tim Nesbitt of the Higher Education Coordinating Committee has proposed to increase FAFSA completion among students already in school. Mr. Brew commented he believes this project will tie in nicely with outreach program expansion projects currently underway.

Commissioner Howard applauded the effort and offered a word of caution about the potential impact to OOG. Discussion followed with Commissioner Howard stating more people may need OOG as Pell Grant recipients increase.

Mr. Brew stated he believes the goal is to bring more federal money into the state.

Chair Weeks stated there is a need to be aware of potential unintended consequences such as developing a greater need than can be met, or will likely create more OOG eligibility and increase demand.

Mr. Brew stated he hopes FAFSA does not become just an application for Pell Grant and OOG, but also for Work Study and federal student loans. He is very cautious about pushing people toward college and then into debt if they are not sure college is right for them.

Mr. Brew announced Theresa Dewees was hired to fill the Accounting Tech II position stating she is fantastic and a welcome addition to staff.

Mr. Brew reported Gear Up has a financial shortfall whereby they are unable to meet all scholarship commitments. The agency is working with them and updates will be provided during future meetings.

Chair Weeks asked about the availability of data on continuation of grants from year to year. Mr. Brew stated the data is available and he will distribute to all.

Chair Weeks commented the data is needed in order to restore predictability and provide encouragement to students and families.

### **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Mr. Brew provided an update on various bills being monitored:

- HB 4120 expands eligibility to reserve sheriffs and volunteer firefighters and could impact OOG
- HB 4084 and HB 4121 gives money to community colleges for child care and conflicts somewhat with the current child care grant program
- SB 1524 allows any student who completes 12<sup>th</sup> grade to attend community college tuition/fee free
- HB 4062 places severe restrictions on K-12 student data sharing and conflicts with longitudinal database concept

Chair Weeks asked about the status of HB 4102 concerning exorbitant fees to students charged by third parties to access the financial aid funds. Mr. Brew stated he will find out and report at the next meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment

Chair Weeks thanked Susie Hose for her work and support of the agency during a challenging time of leadership transition.

Susie Hosie thanked the commissioners stating she really enjoyed working with the agency and believes the work they do is amazing. Susie stated her job rotation is ending and the agency will transition over to Cyndi Smith, but hopes to work with OSAC for labor relations support.

Chair Weeks welcomed Cyndi Smith.

Commissioner Howard thanked Susie for her work and positive approach.

Chair Weeks stated he especially appreciates solutions and guidance provided.

**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. The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Approved by the Commission at Meeting #437 on March 28, 2014*

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*Gary Weeks, Chair*