

**Wyoming School-University Partnership
Governing Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, November 3, 2011**

Governing Board members in attendance: Greg Brown (for Audrey Shalinsky), Debbie Bovee, Bob Bryant, Joel Dvorak, Paige Fenton Hughes, Bob Gates, Jay Harnack, Kathy Hitt, Bryan Monteith, Kay Persichitte, Ray Schulte, Rick Luchsinger, Allen Trent, Diana Clapp, Joe McCann

By Conference call: James Bailey

Guests: Andy Hansen, April Heaney, both from the University of Wyoming

Partnership staff: John Anderson, Audrey Kleinsasser, Heather Yates

Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions

President Paige Fenton Hughes convened the meeting at 10:06 a.m., welcoming those in attendance. Paige asked each to introduce him or herself and tell what they do. She then introduced a free software tool called Wall Wisher. It is a brain storming tool that can be used at different kinds of meetings. She asked everyone to then think of something they would like to see on future agendas, topics or people to invite. Board members responded with their items. *Please go to www.wallwisher.com/wall/uwvowsup to view the list of items.*

2. Review and approve today's meeting agenda

The first order of business was to review and approve the meeting agenda, Bob Bryant moved to approve the agenda and Joel Dvorak seconded. By approving the agenda, members also approved the July 14, 2011 meeting minutes, Partnership bills, and financial report.

3. Partnership and NNER grounding activity

The meeting's topical discussion and NNER and Partnership grounding focused on proposed changes to UW's admissions requirements and an in depth conversation with UW's Andy Hansen and April Heaney about the changes in relationship to equity, access, and excellence.

Andy, a 25-plus year professor of mechanical engineering, currently serves as one of UW's associate provosts in the Office of Academic Affairs. April has been an academic professional lecturer teaching English for about 10 years. She directs the Learning Resource Networks office which features a number of programs to support student success, one of them being Synergy. Synergy and other transition programs will play a significant role for Wyoming freshmen under the category, admitted with support. If approved, the admitted with support admissions category will be effective Fall, 2013, for students with a minimum high school GPA of 2.25, ACT of 20, and varied high school curricula, but not the Hathaway Success Curriculum.

At the request of the UW Trustees, Andy and others have been meeting with groups around the state explaining the proposed changes and collecting feedback. The feedback will be presented to the UW Trustees at their November board meeting when action may be taken. Those groups include at least nine community town hall meetings, the secondary principals' association, Wyoming Education Association, superintendents, and others. Andy and April were pleased with the invitation to meet with the Partnership's Governing Board which represents K-12 and postsecondary education.

In a short overview, Andy explained that the proposed changes bring university admissions requirements in line with the existing Hathaway Success Curriculum and pays close attention to UW's correlational data describing student success (e.g., ACT scores, GPAs, retention numbers). Based on these data, Andy estimates that only 10% of incoming Wyoming students will be affected by this change. For those students, Synergy, along with other transition programs, will take effect. Synergy is an award-winning program that provides additional support, not remediation, through a learning community approach that includes smaller class sizes and more intentional academic advising. The positive effects of Synergy have affected other UW programs, including more emphasis on guided placement and a stretch English 1010 course that has been piloted. In sum, Synergy seems to help students get a foothold in the campus culture, one that includes making friends, being involved, and persisting to graduation.

During the ensuing conversation, board members spoke in unison about the importance of high expectations, rigor, and standards in regard to college readiness. Considering that 50% of incoming UW freshmen lose their Hathaway scholarships after the first semester and are on academic probation, the issue is real and significant. However, in terms of equity and access, several board members expressed concern about the label, admitted with support. Their concerns were lessened by April's descriptions of the program and students' positive evaluations of their experiences. Other board members were concerned about the steady pressure and inclusion of requirements that makes the high school schedule less flexible, especially for world languages, fine arts, and career/technical education options. Again and again, board members emphasized student motivation and choice in a context of high expectations and relevance. In the words of one superintendent, "The process of schooling needs to look more like the process of learning."

As the conversation concluded, several superintendents gave examples of the way an aspirational culture seems to be growing in their schools with, for example, more students talking about going to UW or continuing their studies elsewhere. To that end, several superintendents emphasized the importance of dual/concurrent enrollment courses to provide students some experiences in what college will be like and reasonable first steps into that learning culture. Several board members reminded their colleagues that some at risk high school students are working to help support their families, that Wyoming may have more of a poverty problem than an educational problem. With that, the one-hour discussion closed and Paige invited all to enjoy lunch.

4. Report from the 2011 NNER annual conference

Following lunch, Paige Fenton Hughes introduced Kathy Hitt and Allen Trent so they could update the board members about the 2011 NNER annual conference and their recent experiences at the meeting.

Kathy Hitt is a member of the NNER's Tripartite Council representing K-12. She spent the morning at the NNER conference with peers from a variety of different backgrounds. What is the mission of NNER? How do we promote the mission? What kind of recommendations could they make to the governing board? These were a few questions Kathy and her group tried to answer during the Tripartite Council meeting. She felt that this was the first conference in a long time where she felt intellectually engaged from the beginning. She liked that it was a peaceful setting where she could communicate with many people.

Allen Trent, also a member of the NNER Tripartite Council (representing teacher education) strongly believes in the value of the NNER conferences. He has gone to 11 out of the last 12 annual conferences. A large part of the conference was break out discussions. Allen reported on many good discussions with conference attendees. In one session, Allen reported learning from a principal and a teacher. The principal talked about the democratic decision-making at schools while the teacher talked about teaching students more about democracy, politics, and social studies. The teacher also spoke about creating a collaborative project and trying to close the achievement gap. Allen used this example to recommend that we should tell stories about the good work being done, when to be involved, better PK-16 alignments, better assessment of that which is important to us even if they are hard to assess, increase communication and ways to connect, and how to share information and data. He concluded by saying that we need to participate in national conversations even if the conversations are opposed to our own views.

Audrey Kleinsasser attended the Tripartite and Governing Council meetings. She stated that the NNER is the Partnership's parent organization. There are 21 settings who pay \$5,000 per year to be a part of the network. This pays for a part time executive director and other expenses. Over the next year, there will be a transition as the NNER searches for a new executive director and convenes a strategic planning meeting. Representing the 21 settings, 12 were selected to participate in strategic planning. The group will meet December 2-4, 2011 in Seattle, WA. Audrey has been invited to participate, representing the Wyoming School-University Partnership.

Then, Audrey updated the Governing Board about the October 18-20, 2012 NNER conference. Wyoming, Nebraska, and Colorado will co-sponsor the conference which will be held in Denver. In order to promote participation, the Partnership has budgeted \$20,000 for participation scholarships. She noted that reports from the School-Community Engagement Initiative will be on the conference program, too. Audrey concluded by saying that the planners are seeking questions and ideas for the conference and plans to offer UW graduate credit and PTSB renewal credit for those interested, especially Wyoming educators.

5. Updates: Around the Partnership; other reports

Paige Fenton Hughes introduced John Anderson who is facilitating the School-Community Engagement Initiative. John reported that three schools are participating this first year: Torrington Middle School, Pinedale High School, and Worland High School. In the next week, John will be meeting with the classes involved, inviting students to think about a problem or issue that is community-based and ways to address it. John believes this is where the learning about democracy occurs, with student concerns and ideas. There is a positive aspect about inquiry and John feels that the initiative should be in every building in Wyoming, especially an elementary school. Audrey Kleinsasser added that the schools were invoiced \$2,500 each to participate. She then thanked Jay (Pinedale) and Ray (Torrington) for their support and encouragement of local teachers during this pilot year.

Paige Fenton Hughes asked Audrey Kleinsasser to update the Governing Board about Wyoming P-16 Education Council activities. Audrey stated a key issue for the P-16 Council is to tackle issues no other group can tackle. One example is finding a way to address myths about going to college. One myth is that postsecondary study might be out of reach financially. Also, the Council is looking for representatives to fill an early childhood slot. Joe McCann, Wyoming Community College Commission, also explained that the P-16 council will continue to focus on dual/concurrent enrollment issues. Last, Audrey alerted the Governing Board about a February 16 statewide STEM summit to be convened by the P-16 Council in Casper.

Paige Fenton Hughes asked Diana Clapp to speak about a broad-based task force working on a Statewide Longitudinal Data System. Diana informed the Governing Board that the task force has developed a plan for governance and the necessary data systems to include PK to post-secondary, also workforce services. It will be a large project with a number of individuals involved. Right now, the plan is for the Wyoming Department of Education to provide the home for the system. Task force members are sensitive to the issue of data protection. Joe McCann stated that this system would not create a new bureaucracy. Diana confirmed that since the task force represents virtually all stakeholders, a wide range of concerns are being raised and addressed. Ray Schulte asked about the high cost of the system and how it will be funded. With federal grant money available, some of the initial development and implementation costs would be covered. Joe again emphasized the importance of data security and creating a system that informs accountability.

Paige Fenton Hughes introduced James Bailey who joined the group by conference call. James is the superintendent of Unita School District #1 and, along with Diana Clapp, is a member of the Advisory Committee on Educational Accountability which has been meeting for the last six months. The committee was appointed by the Wyoming Legislature's Select Committee on Educational Accountability which also has been meeting during the same time frame. James explained that the committee had spent 50-60 hours in face-to-face meetings talking through a statewide, K-12 accountability system. At this point, James said that the advisory committee felt good about its work and that it was adhering to the legislative intent. Committee members want to make sure such an accountability system is doable for all districts and slowly phased in. James conceded that this will be a big transition for districts and will require capacity building that might not exist at the present.

Diana explained that the advisory committee focused on school and district level accountability, not teacher- or school-board member accountability, as some legislators advocated. She said that the system will likely feature value added growth models and student growth percentiles. James concurred, saying that he thinks the accountability system will be focused at the district-level first. Phase 1 will be about the school accountability, support for the schools, status/growth, and require a different kind of support, including professional development. Diana believes that the Wyoming Legislature wants data to be aggregated in a single pass/fail type of score easily understood by parents and the general public. The Advisory Committee will resist that recommendation, however. Greg Brown asked if the advisory committee's work s included university involvement at any phase. James answered by saying no, that for now the accountability system targets elementary and secondary education. Audrey explained that the UW Office of Academic Affairs asked her to attend the Advisory Committee meetings on behalf of the university. Audrey concluded this part of the meeting by letting Governing Board members know that the Joint Education Committee would be meeting in Cheyenne, November 15-16 to discuss work of the Select Committee and its Advisory Committee.

6. Evaluation of today's meeting and adjournment

With all of the business items completed, Chair Paige Fenton Hughes adjourned the meeting at 2:01 p.m., inviting board members to complete their meeting feedback forms. (Feedback is transcribed and presented on page 3 of the minutes.) She thanked board members and guests for coming.

Minutes prepared by Heather Yates
November 23, 2011

Governing Board Meeting Feedback

N= 10 (20 in attendance, plus one by conference call late in the meeting)

1. Please list two things that were important or worked well in today's governing board meeting.

A.

- Report from Adv. Comm/Ed Accountability
- Conversation with Andy Hansen & April Heaney – meaningful dialogue
- Hearing from UW admissions & Synergy
- The “hot topics” relayed during the introductory piece
- The conversation around UW admission requirements and Synergy
- Good to have information from UW on admissions' requirements. April's presence added to my understanding of Synergy Program.
- Conversation about UW admissions & student support – great opportunity. Thanks
- High engagement & quality discussion
- Keeping morning agenda simple, allowing plenty of time for good, stimulating conversation.
- The conversation regarding UW admissions standards and K-12 and post-secondary expectations was very informative and important.

B.

- Andy & April: UW Admissions proposal
- Provocative thought (from Joel) “School needs to look more like learning”
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- Aspirational stories
- Update on legislative action
- It was good to be able to provide insight from the “trenches” about why some students are not ready for post-secondary ed.
- WSUP updates – good!
- Good questions “What does this group do differently from other groups, and where do we go?”
- Last update on accountability.
- Discussion involving statewide accountability content and progress also pertinent.

2. What did you learn or understand differently about college readiness, access, equity, and excellence that you didn't know before?

- How hard our minority districts are working on this
- Universal agreement in this group: hold to high standards
- Still don't fully understand the expected outcome & purpose of the admissions' changes
- Although there are issues to be addressed, the group representing several districts & constituencies were supporting the admissions (new) policy.
- ?
- I did confirm that a student could have SAT (sic) of 21, GPA of 3.0, but without the “right” curriculum could not qualify for Hathaway dollars. I am troubled by this.
- Trying to learn more about UW's intent – very helpful. Lots of different opinions – do your best.
- Multiple perspectives from districts & superintendents.
- General concern across participants for solid base-line ed. for all h.s. students.
- Better understanding of UW rationale and purpose.

3. What did not work well during today's meeting?

- Good mtg – excellent use of time – don't have enough opportunities to share w/these ed stakeholders
- Nothing noted
- Good meeting –
- Technology
- All was good
- All good
- Computer wall wisher “thing” at start
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4. How might we improve the meeting? (e.g., board member engagement, information prior to the meeting, the meeting site, the agenda, printed materials supporting the agenda, the pace, time frame)

- Realize timing is bad, but would be great to have P-12 teacher involvement
- no suggestions – well done Thank you
- Nothing noted
- ?
- All was good
- Maybe a small group discussion of one of the key issues
- All seemed good to me. Great conversation. Great lunch.
- Nothing to suggest.

5. Is there anything else important for meeting planners to know?

- Food was great. Agenda followed, adhere to time constraints.
- Thanks.
- ?
- No
- Great mtng, informative, meaningful, open conversation. Please make every effort to follow-up on suggestions for future mtngs – great idea – let's move that to a good practice. Great lunch!
- Thank you for everything!
- No
- Nope – nice work thanks.