

COSFL Meeting–December 6, 2008

Student Services Building (Room 549), Eastern Kentucky University, with KTLN links to Maysville Community College, Murray State University, University of Louisville, and Western Kentucky University.

Attending

Carol Bredemeyer, NKU
Ed Conner, KSU
Malcolm Frisbie, EKU
Angie Fultz, Maysville Community College
David Hogan, NKU
Karen Janssen, EKU (COSFL Treasurer)
Tucker Landy, KSU
Melissa Laning, U of L
Nancy McKenney, EKU (COSFL Secretary)
Tom McPartland, KSU
Patti Minter, WKU
Peggy Pittman-Munke, Murray State (COSFL President)
Mike Seelig (Council on Post-Secondary Education)
Julie Shadoan, WKU
Bob Staat, U of L
Mixon Ware, EKU (COSFL Vice President)
Mark Wattier, Murray State (Faculty Rep. to the CPE)

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Peggy Pittman-Munke and was adjourned at 12:00 noon.

Presentation by Mike Seelig

The order of business for this meeting of COSFL was a presentation by Mike Seelig, Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs of the Council on Post-Secondary Education (CPE). Seelig, who chaired COSFL in 1986/1987, is on loan from Morehead State University until May 2009 as a replacement for the CPE's Jim Applegate. Seelig's presentation concerned the work of Gov. Steve Beshear's recently formed Higher Education Work Group. The Work Group is co-chaired by Mira Ball (of Ball Homes) and Pete Mahurin. The Higher Education Work Group consists of 18 individuals, many from the private sector. Among its members are former Governor Paul Patton and Richard Crofts, Interim Head of the CPE.

The Governor established the Work Group on October 21, 2008, and his executive order also created two subcommittees of the Work Group:

1) Affordability Subcommittee –Chaired by Jonathan Miller, Secretary of the Finance and Administration Cabinet. This subcommittee is charged with issuing a report by Jan. 15, 2009 when the Legislature will be in short session. With such a short time frame, the recommendations put forward will have to be things not requiring much discussion.

2) Strategic Planning Subcommittee –Chaired by Larry Hayes. This subcommittee is charged with submitting a report in September 2009. These recommendations will include student accessibility as well as affordability. The issue of consistent funding will be addressed. The Governor wants recommendations on how to structure funding.

The Higher Education Work Group began with three advisory groups: university presidents, independent colleges, and students. At the CPE the question was raised, “what happened to faculty?” Mark Wattier, Faculty Rep. to the CPE and Mike Seelig both recommended that COSFL fill the role of a statewide faculty group to advise the Work Group.

Seelig briefly outlined meetings that have taken place thus far and indicated that COSFL in having its meeting today is not far behind. He stated that the Affordability Subcommittee would meet Dec. 18th to make a first draft of their recommendations and that COSFL would need to submit its ideas a day or two before that.

Discussion

Seelig pointed out that he and probably other faculty as well struggle with the affordability issue because what is being addressed is not typically part of a faculty member’s experience. There is a problem with students not taking advantage of financial aid because they don’t fill out the proper forms, many of which are rather complex. He noted that 51% of students at Morehad pay no tuition at all. It actually is not tuition costs but living expenses that are hurting students. He mentioned that the student advisory group to the Higher Education Work Group will be focusing exclusively on textbook costs.

Concerns raised by COSFL members in the discussion included:

1. Level of student debt for education (sometimes as much as \$50,000) and the need for parental savings.
2. The need to inform students and their parents about financial aid and to convince the public of the importance of higher education.
3. The need to ask where the money in higher education is going. Is it going to an excessive increase in administration at universities?
4. The need for and cost of remedial education.
5. The paperwork burden on faculty due to SACS, etc.
6. The looming state budget cuts and their impact on higher education.

Course of Action

It was agreed that Chair Peggy Pittman-Munke would draft a letter from COSFL to the Governor and to the four people chairing the Higher Education Work Group and its subcommittees. She indicated her intention of sending out a draft of this letter to all COSFL members in the coming week.

It was also decided that the next COSFL meeting should be held in Frankfort at the Council on Post-Secondary Education.

On December 12, 2008, Dr. Pittman-Munke e-mailed COSFL members a draft of her letter to the Governor and the Higher Education Work Group. In the letter she indicated COSFL's full support of the priorities of the Affordability Subcommittee of the Higher Education Work Group, including:

1. Fundamentally rethinking Kentucky's Financial Aid programs
2. Enhancing state level coordination of student financial aid policy development and administration
3. Conducting a comprehensive review of time and credit to degree
4. Expanding partnerships with the business community to improve college access
5. Improving opportunities for adult learners
6. Establishing an intensive public/private outreach effort to enable more Kentuckians to access existing higher education financial aid dollars, with a
7. Focus on low- and moderate-income students and military veterans
8. Improving the transparency and predictability of non-tuition related costs of higher education
9. Exploring cost containment strategies for both students and institutions

She state that COSFL, in addition to the above broad principles, supports the following:

1. A strengthened working relationship between the CPE and colleges
2. A formula that allows the colleges to be able to do consistent budgeting over a five year period
3. The development of methods state wide to streamline transfers between institutions, particularly for those students transferring to four year institutions from the community colleges
4. Enhanced methods of streamlining access to colleges for adult learners

Minutes submitted by,
Nancy McKenney
EKU Representative to COSFL