

**Student Advisory Committee to the
Board of Regents for Higher Education
March 23, 2016
3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

Minutes – Special Meeting

1. Call to Order – 4:04 p.m.

2. Roll Call

1. COSC
2. MCC
3. NWCC
4. ECSU
5. HCC
6. NVCC
7. ACC
8. GCC

3. President Ojakain

- a. We are proposing a 5% increase at the universities
- b. A 4% increases at Charter Oak
- c. A 3.5% increase at the community colleges
- d. I understand how difficult this is on the students. I will not balance the budget on the backs of students. To cover the cost of our deficit for next year I'd have to raise it by 11% at the colleges and 7.5% at the universities. We had to look at a reasonable increase.
- e. Compared to our New England neighbors, we are still the most affordable.
- f. The governor cut 26 million from the budget already and the state isn't done cutting yet.
- g. We assume a 0 % increase for collective bargaining based on the governor's budget. If that assumption doesn't hold, and even if it does, we still have a deficit.
- h. If we had done nothing, there would have been dramatic cuts to the universities and colleges.
- i. The cuts are going to get worse in the years to come. It has to because of the budget deficits.
- j. We need to do a better job of articulating the need for higher education in our state.
- k. We are in a new economic climate. We won't see tax increases, so they are going to have to cut budgets. The legislators don't understand the reserves at the universities. They see it as an overpayment and cut on that basis.
- l. I get that the money is a lot. I realize students are going to work in addition to school. We are working to rework the financial aid and the Governors scholarship, but we have to raise tuition to compensate for some of these cuts.
- m. I had to make a proposal I could live with, this is what I came up with.
- n. My commitment to you is to be honest. This is honest.
- o. What cuts will be coming next?
 - i. That's a conversation we will have to keep having together. There are no more loops on the belt to cut.
 - ii. We're going to need groups of faculty, administrators, and students to solve these issues on how we make ourselves more efficient. There's going to be a very thoughtful process for fy17.
- p. Who comes up with these budgets?
 - i. It's a legislative process that we don't have a whole lot of control over. The deficit has been less generous than it has been in the past.
- q. What will this increase in tuition do to students on financial aid?

- i. To students receiving pell, there's still a bit of relief in the pell cap. We are going to have to work with institutions to bring packages together for students financial aid especially at the universities.
 - ii. There will be more aid available because we raised tuition
 - r. It's important to remember that we intend to approach this budget in a creative manor. There's not going to be more money. We have to work together to make this better.
 - s. We can't do business as usual. There will be changes to speak to the legislatures soon. We need to lobby in a respectful way.
 - t. I (the President) will go to the campuses to talk to students and faculty. I'm open to ideas.
 - u. If we continue to assure students that there is a future outside of school, they may see this as an investment.
 - v. We're doing a lot around transportation and future jobs and internships. We're trying to do a lot more outside of just tuition increases.
 - w. This committee is the future leaders of our state. We look to you for advice. Thank you for being student leaders. It's important that we advocate for our schools.
 - x. Where are the possible areas these budget cuts could come from?
 - i. Once the budget cuts are final, it's up to the institution to present a balanced budget. I (the President) will not micromanage these cuts. We can't just kick this can down the road or we will be in worse shape next year.
 - y. You don't want to have to choose between programs. That's not a great way to run a college; nobody wants to make those decisions. We want to produce well rounded individuals, it's all important.
 - z. We're still going to have a remaining deficit?
 - i. Best case, no new cuts or costs, colleges \$10.7 mil and at the universities about \$7.1 mil.
 - aa. Questions for students to pose on their campuses:
 - i. What if we could close the deficit by raising tuition alone? Would that be a solution?
 - 1. We need to continue to lobby. That kind of tuition increase is crazy.
 - 2. Write letters or emails to the legislature. Now is a great time to write a letter. Find out who to write to and send them an email.
 - 3. Exercise your right to vote too.
 - bb. There are only so many dollars. The legislators have difficult decisions to make too. Target both sides of the isle. We have powerful constituents.
 - cc. We need to encourage more conversation. We need to all be together on this issue.
 - dd. Students who go to school in a state tend to stay there. Students don't care until it's coming out of their pocket and by then it's too late. We need to mobilize our campuses. This is a problem we all need to deal with. We can't expect the state to just give us more money. This is going to be a group effort. We're going to have to figure this out together. No one can do this alone. We all have to be willing to come together and figure this out.
 - ee. Is our main issue a lack of students? Why? I think it's a combination of lower populations of high schoolers but there are also certain segments of the population that we haven't been able to reach. We also don't do a good enough job of selling ourselves. We need to do more on enrollment, but we need to be reasonable with our expectations. Even if we had a 10% increase in enrollment, it wouldn't solve our problem.
 - ff. Are our classes at capacity? Our institutions are not at capacity but that's a different question. Are we looking at the whole numbers? If we could up our enrollment, would this lessen our burden. We need to recruit new students and help mentor students who are there to help them to stay. We don't have the hands on experience in advising, so we need mentors. We also have to work on retention.
 - gg. How will the increase in tuition have on enrollment? It's not an easy thing to gauge. We are working with the institutions to make sure the impact is limited. You are going to see tuition increases at a lot of institutions. There are challenges everywhere.
 - hh. When is the last time we raised tuition? Last year and the year before. I'm happy to come to your campuses and talk to your student bodies as well to discuss it.
4. Adjourn – 4:15 pm