



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes August 22, 2014

Individuals in Attendance

Trustees: Theresa Alder, Doug Barton, Scott Bushnell, Brent Davis, Chris Jenkins, Dan Jorgensen, Leslie Keisel, Jeff Olson

Others: Bob Prince, Regent

College Personnel: Gary Carlston, President; Beckie Hermansen, Director of Institutional Research; Spencer Hill, Vice President for Finance and Administrative Services; Steve Hood, Vice President for Academic Affairs; Melanie Jenkins, Strategic Planning Task Force Co-Chair; Marci Larsen, Board Secretary; Craig Mathie, Vice President for Student Success; Jessica Siegfried, Director of Residence Life

Strategic Plan Report

Melanie Jenkins shared the history of the strategic plan process, mentioning specifically a faculty meeting where faculty requested such a plan before more difficult budgetary decisions regarding academic programs were made. She said the administration was already looking into possibilities for such a process, and a team representing each academic division and various staff units was created. Ms. Jenkins commended the team members and said a national, comprehensive model was used. She reminded the trustees of the two phases of the model: data gathering and then attaching the budget to the decisions. She also reminded the trustees of the hundreds of meetings held to solicit input and gather information and said five themes naturally surfaced as guiding pillars for the college's future. Ms. Jenkins continued to explain the process, noting that each budget holder was asked to complete a program prioritization questionnaire (PPQ) and said the task force members then ranked budgets in a tiered quintile system. To summarize her presentation, Ms. Jenkins offered the following points:

- This was a herculean time commitment for committee members
- The process was fair, balanced, and objective
- The process was inclusive; she noted every employee had the opportunity to participate as little or as much as they wanted
- The process was very transparent; she said people were encouraged to discuss all components with their departments and divisions
- The college is well prepared for the next accreditation process; she said work for the future has been completed with this process
- There has been an enormous amount of positive feedback; Ms. Jenkins also acknowledged she also heard a few complaints, as you would expect from any ranking process
- The committee agreed unanimously that this is the report they wanted to submit

Chair Alder thanked Ms. Jenkins, Vice President Dodge (who co-chaired the task force prior to his departure to SUU), and all who were involved in the process. She recognized the significant time and effort required of task force members and employees submitting the PPQs. She said she had been contacted by a few employees regarding the strategic plan, and she encouraged an open discussion with the trustees. A lengthy discussion ensued.

Trustee Olson expressed strong support for the five themes produced during the strategic plan process, and he expressed some concern over the PPQs. Ms. Jenkins again acknowledged that she had heard some employees voice their desire to re-do the program prioritization questionnaire. Dr. Hood said he believed the process had been helpful because it encouraged each department to do a self-analysis and look for opportunities to improve. Trustee Bushnell asked how this plan addressed non-existing programs, and Ms. Jenkins said everyone had an opportunity to propose new ideas as they completed the PPQs and analyzed their current strengths and weaknesses. Trustee Davis asked how soon the college planned to review the process, and Ms. Jenkins said the plan called for a three to five year review. President Carlston said the administration had decided to go ahead and implement the items in the top quintile and have further discussion about what to do with the other quintiles. He said, for example, the college could fund the second quintile if there are more resources or they could address other needs which fit within the five themes.

In response to the budgetary questions, Vice President Hill said there were more winners than losers during this process and said most did not receive a reduction to their budget unless they reported they could live on less. He also pointed out that the report was not as draconian as the model said to be; specifically, he said the model outlined the plan to cut the bottom quintile, which the task force did not recommend. Trustee Olson asked if external initiatives were considered in the ranking and asked specifically about support for STEM programs. President Carlston said the college is very committed to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and reminded the trustees about the efforts for the new science building. It was also noted that STEM programs had received additional budgetary dollars outside of the strategic planning process. President Carlston again reminded the group that this process did not de-emphasize any academic program.

Trustee Olson asked if faculty senate, college council, and other groups were in support of the plan. Ms. Jenkins said the report is not policy and was therefore not presented to each group for approval. She said the model used throughout the process called for this to be a direct report to the administration, and she noted the role of the committee was defined at the beginning. President Carlston said members of senate and college council were definitely invited to participate, attend the conferences, and be involved. Chair Alder said from the beginning the Board of Trustees has also been involved, and she reminded the group she attended several meetings, including the day-long goals and vision conferences. Having said that, President Carlston said he would be disappointed if anyone felt there was any attempt to thwart the transparency and visibility of the process. He again stressed that aspect of the model and assured the trustees that the task force members operated openly and honorably, while including all in the process, and he expressed his strong desire for this strategic plan to be a unifying tool for the college.

Trustee Jorgensen observed this had been a “bottom up” approach, and he said he liked it. He believes it is reflective of the college’s strengths, and he said he isn’t bothered that everyone didn’t make the top quintile. He asked the group to remember it’s a process and – in his opinion – a very worthwhile process. He encouraged the administration to use their vision and creativity in implementing the plan and said their leadership will determine the success of the college in the future.

President Carlston expressed his thanks to those involved in this entire process. He mentioned the missed Spring Break of most task force members, and he commended Ms. Jenkins and Vice President Dodge for their leadership. He stated his desire to maintain the fidelity of the plan as presented and also recognized the need to discuss next steps. He said the majority of employees have been positive about the process and the final report, and again he noted a few disagreed last week with the final report. He said he has faith in the committee and said they were studious and worked with integrity. He stated the focus of the process should be on the five goals and themes, and acknowledged the PPQ portion is only a snapshot of the entire process.

Chair Alder again thanked Ms. Jenkins for her work and sacrifice, and she thanked those in attendance who had been involved with the process. She asked that the trustees’ appreciation be communicated to everyone who participated in this process and asked that special thanks be given for their efforts to make their programs even better than they currently are. Hearing no more questions or concerns, Chair Alder entertained a motion to accept and approve the final strategic plan as presented. Trustee Jorgensen so moved. Trustee Barton seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Fifteen to Finish Initiative

Vice President Craig Mathie provided an update on the state-wide initiative, “Fifteen to Finish,” which encourages students to complete fifteen credits each semester. He said the college has tied scholarship requirements to this goal, and reported that 42 percent of all students are currently enrolled in 15 credits. Vice President Mathie said while this percentage rate is much higher than the system’s 18 percent, the college will continue to promote the initiative and encourage all students to complete 15 credits each semester. According to a recently completed survey, Vice President Mathie reported students who take at least the suggested 15 credits are retained better and have a higher GPA.

Enrollment Report

Dr. Beckie Hermansen, Director of Institutional Research, was asked to share an enrollment report with the Trustees. She provided a detailed historical sketch of enrollment numbers which highlighted pertinent events related to enrollment changes. She explained the reporting process to the board and said she expected numbers to be up 400+ when final

enrollments are submitted. Trustee Bushnell asked for clarification on the definition of “headcount,” and Regent Prince asked about the current student demographics. Dr. Hermansen responded with statistics and concluded her report by telling the trustees she believes Snow College is still the most productive and best investment in the entire state. President Carlston thanked Dr. Hermansen for her report and efforts to keep the administration informed on enrollment numbers and trends.

Housing Report

Ms. Jessica Siegfried, Director of Residence Life, was invited to the meeting to present a report on the current housing situation at the college. She briefly reviewed past occupancy rates and perceptions of on-campus housing and then focused on current demands and student experiences. She noted that all beds on-campus are full and said additional interested students were placed on a waiting list. After personally calling every student with a single room to ask if they would consider having a shared room, Ms. Siegfried said her office was able to accommodate most students on the list. Because the college’s housing is at capacity, the group discussed plans for the future; possible solutions included finishing the lower level of the suites, purchasing and converting off-campus units to on-campus, and encouraging additional private development.

Vice President Mathie commended Ms. Siegfried for her work and noted she was asked to transform on-campus housing when she was hired, and – more specifically – to create a sense of community rather than the residence halls simply being a place to sleep. He said she has done a great job accomplishing this goal, and Trustee Bushnell asked her how she has increased the occupancy rates by such significant numbers. In response, Ms. Siegfried shared her philosophy and outlined changes in the department’s organization and processes which have made a difference. President Carlston added his appreciation for Ms. Siegfried’s work, and she graciously accepted the compliments and thanked her team for their contributions to the office’s success. President Carlston told the trustees how grateful he is for all of the employees’ contributions to the college.

General Education Discussion Report

Due to time, this agenda item was postponed and will be discussed at a future meeting.

Report from the Alumni Association

Due to time, this report was postponed. Trustee Olson did invite all trustees and their families to return to campus on September 27 for the Homecoming weekend festivities.

Report from the Student Body President

Student Body President Chris Jenkins said the first week of school has been a success thus far and shared plans for the upcoming week. He said one of his goals, set after hearing President Carlston’s vision, is to reach out to students who are struggling. He said his team is working to be inclusive and help all students have an exceptional experience on campus.

Report from the Chair

Chair Alder thanked the trustees for their service to the college and reported that Trustee Bolli had accepted employment out-of-state and, therefore, submitted his resignation. She said the administration would work with the Governor’s Office to appoint a replacement.

Report from the President

President Carlston quickly shared two updates with the trustees: First, he happily reported that the science building replacement project was ranked second on the State Board of Regents’ prioritization list, and secondly, he commented on the “Spirit of Snow” and said how honored he and Janet are to be part of the great institution. He shared two stories illustrating the quality of people at the college and, again, thanked employees for their work and dedication. To conclude his report, trustees watched the recent KSL news story from campus which highlighted employees rallying support for a student recently diagnosed with ALS by participating in a campus-wide “ice bucket challenge.”

Remarks from Regents

Regent Prince thanked the college for the invitation to attend the meeting. He emphasized the Board of Regents’ support for the science building and said how much he enjoys his assignment with the college. He expressed appreciation to the trustees and administration for their dedication to the success of Snow College.