

**DRAFT**

**Minutes of the Meeting held February 8, 2008**

**Present:** Cuppoletti (UC); Ray, Gelman (CSU); Casper (KSU); Wright, Bloemer (OU); Milburn, (Central State); McKenna, Rorsmanrere (Miami); Billman, McKee (OSU); Bernhard (BGSU); Ahuja, King (YSU); Kravec (NEOUCOM); Fenwick, Sterns (UA)

Chair Cuppoletti called the meeting to order at 12:20

**New Business**

Dr. Bernhard (BGSU) handed out a draft of a document “A Faculty Development Priority for the University System of Ohio,” and moved that it be accepted by OFC as a priority for the University System of Ohio. There was discussion on the document and concerns raised about whether the USO would move more courses fully or mostly on-line. It was decided to table the document and have it sent on-line to members of the OFC for discussion at a future meeting.

Chancellor Fingerhut introduced Speaker of the House Husted to the OFC at 12:30.

Speaker Husted began the discussion by recounting previous state budget cycles and the various spending constraints. He then reviewed current state initiatives with regard to higher education, including the Ohio First program and STEM and math education. He pointed out that the Gates Foundation had just given the state a \$12m grant for Ohio’s K-12 STEM education program, on top of \$68m that the Foundation had previously given the program.

Speaker Husted then pointed to the need to get more HS seniors to take courses for college credit, as was embraced by Governor Strickland’s “Senior to Sophomore” proposal. There were still important issues to be solved regarding the proposal, especially how the program would be funded. Who would pay- K-12 districts or higher education, or the same way that charter schools were supported by having the money follow the students?

The Speaker then opened up the discussion for questions.

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Q (Gelman, CSU): Could you clarify your remark to the NEO Commission that you were there to “give them the courage to do what they need to do”?

A: NEO universities need to see how to coordinate and work together, for example as UT and UTHSC have done. There was some merit to the recommendations from the NEO Commission report, but it was a beginning, not an end, to the process.

Q (Gelman, CSU): Would the different funding formulas for schools be based on their contributions to the goals in the Master Plan for USO?

A: It is not clear how this will play out. Legislators' interests and universities' interests will play into the outcome. It is unlikely that universities will like what the Chancellor has to say; I probably will.

Universities like to say what they do well, but are hesitant to say what they don't do well (just like everyone). Universities need to prioritize, and the only way to encourage them to do this is through funding priorities.

Q (Wright, OU): Will there be enough money to pay for priorities?

Q (Cuppoletti, UC): Would the money come from the Governor's proposed sale of state bonds?

A: The Speaker stated that he disagreed fundamentally with the principle of "borrowing your way to prosperity." It had only been seven months since Moody's had cautioned Ohio about its bond rating. The state had already "securitized" the money it had received from the Tobacco settlement to pay for the senior homestead exemption tax break. Raising \$1.7b in more bonds would bring Ohio close to its constitutional limit on borrowing. The Speaker stated his preference for a "pay as you grow" policy that would include tax incentives to encourage businesses to invest in Ohio.

Q: What, then, was the future of higher education funding?

A: It was not tied to the proposed new state bonds. New bonds would actually hurt higher education funding because they would reduce capacity for raising additional capital funds, and the state would be burdened over the next twenty years by having to pay off the bond debt.

Q: Will centralized decision making on academic programs (through the US) be worse since the decisions would be made further from the programs themselves?

A: Universities need to develop a set of objective criteria to evaluate their programs, although there will always be debate about what the criteria should include and leave out.

The USO will not tell schools what programs they can keep, it just won't pay for those that are not up to the quality needed.

Q (Sterns, UA): Although UT and UTHSC had been merged, there was a history of greater coordination and cooperation NEOUCOM and NEO universities than between the Toledo schools.

A: Change's coming.

Q (Bernhard, BGSU): There were concerns that programs and faculty at the different universities would be held to the same metrics in the USO.

A: The USO was the Chancellor's plan, not that of the legislature. But the legislature will have to approve the plan.

Q: Universities are continuously evaluating their academic programs through internal program reviews and outside accreditation agencies.

A: The Speaker was concerned that there are only a few market forces that are considered in evaluations of higher education.

Q: What were the Speaker's thoughts on the proposal for uniform textbooks throughout Ohio universities, as proposed by an OBOR staff member and incorporated into SB 151?

A: I would never be for that. What makes the system of higher education in the United States good is that it is not a single system.

OFC thanked Speaker Husted for his time and continued willingness to meet and speak with the group. (1:30).

Chair Cuppoletti then handed out a copy of presentation he had made to OBOR and asked for approval to have it posted on the OFC website. After discussion, the OFC voted to do so.

There was a brief discussion of how program reviews would be handled under USO, and concerns about the legal power of the Chancellor to cut university programs. Chair Cuppoletti expressed his opinion that OBOR seemed to be comfortable with their new role and worked well with the Chancellor.

There followed a brief discussion of the new draft of the USO "dashboard." How would these dashboard measures capture strategic planning and budget decisions?

It was pointed out that OSU was currently undergoing evaluations of graduate programs

in an effort to cut funding. OSU's graduate programs were now "playing to the metrics."

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Dr. Sterns brought to the attention of OFC that the UA Faculty Senate had passed a resolution regarding HB 315 on retirees' health benefits asking OFC to support the bill.

Chair Cuppoletti stated that OFC had previously declined to endorse the bill in the spring of 2007 after meeting with a member of the STRS board. He further pointed out that the Ohio Conference of AAUP had endorsed the bill.

There was then a suggestion that faculty bargaining units could take up the issue of endorsing the bill.

Chair Cuppoletti thanked Vice-Chair Ahuja for chairing the January meeting.

Dr. Gelman raised concerns about the My Time pay system at CSU. The CSU administration had stated it was not technologically possible to change systems and who could have access.

The minutes of the January 11, 2008 OFC meeting were approved unanimously.

**Next Meeting, March 14, 2008**

The guest will be Senator Roberts of the Ohio State Senate Education Committee.

The OFC meeting was adjourned at 2:30.

Respectfully submitted,

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