

Western Illinois University  
Board of Trustees  
Academic and Student Services Committee

November 4, 2005

Committee Members Present: Trustee Lorraine Epperson (Chair), Trustee Carolyn J. Ehlert, Trustee Christopher M. Thomas, Vice President for Student Services W. Garry Johnson and Provost and Academic Vice President Joseph C. Rallo

Committee Member Absent: Trustee George J. Guzzardo

Also Present: Trustee William L. Epperly, President Alvin Goldfarb (*Ex-Officio*), Trustee J. Michael Houston (*Ex-Officio*), Legal Counsel Bruce J. Biagini and Administrative Assistant to the Board Kerry L. Yadgar

Guest Speakers: Pat Sartore (Director of Beu Health Center)

Trustee Lorraine Epperson called the meeting of the Academic and Student Services Committee to order at 9:55 A.M. in the Capitol Rooms of the University Union, WIU-Macomb. She welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Approval of September 9, 2005, Academic and Student Services Committee Meeting Minutes**

The minutes of the September 9, 2005, Academic and Student Services Committee Meeting were approved.

**Report on Student Health Insurance Program**

Vice President Johnson asked Director of Beu Health Center Pat Sartore to join him for the update on our student health insurance program. He noted the program continues to be very successful. After settling the end-of-the-year transactions, he transferred \$700,000 to the reserve fund. We are now prepared to transfer an additional \$300,000 which will bring the fund up to \$1 million. We will not transfer any further funds until we see how we are at the end of this year. We are excited to be able to report the progress. Pat is doing a great job of managing the program on this end and we continue to be very, very pleased with the work of HCH.

Ms. Sartore distributed a hand-out that summarized data for the FY2004 year and information on current claim activities July - October. We have over 7,000 students enrolled in the health insurance program. Our participation seems to increase annually and that is to our advantage. The students do not always get their claims submitted in a timely manner, and the claim numbers for July and August indicate that. There was a huge influx of claims in July and August. It does make it look as if we have had a tremendous outlay in those two months.

Our conservative projection for this year is that we will end with no less than a half million in excess. If we do, then we will be right on course. Our reserve fund will be solid and we can discuss how we might want to move ahead. The program is working.

Vice President Johnson noted that our goal from the beginning was to try to make certain that we stabilize as much as possible our health insurance costs for students. We believe that with the Board's support we have been able to do that. When we get to the March meeting we will discuss at that point in time if we do anything relative to an increase in the fee for next year or if we continue as we did this year and stay at the same level. We will do that analysis with HCH through the next number of months.

Trustee Houston congratulated Vice President Johnson and his staff on the million dollars in reserve. He noted the Board is looking to have a total of \$3 million in reserve. The sooner we can get to that level, the better off we will be. We can then take a look at our coverage and make a determination whether we continue with it at that level. It is important to have a significant amount of money that will cover the University. As we talk about the self funded insurance, it is the University that is backing it up if there is a problem. Our numbers continue to look very good. You can be very proud of what you have put together.

Vice President Johnson commended Pat and the Beu Health Center staff. It is about serving the students and keeping the costs as low as we can. HCH is doing a wonderful job as well. They are a part of this and together it is a great partnership. We will continue to work on behalf of the students.

Ms. Sartore added that the program has been very positive for the students who use it. If they get their claims in, they are reimbursed in a timely manner. That has been extremely important for many students who might have large medical bills on their accounts. When it comes registration time, we can get those bills cleared for them quickly. We have not had the complaints that we have had in the past when claims were reimbursed much slower. It is working extremely well for the students.

#### **General Comments by Vice Presidents**

Provost Rallo noted there are four key searches currently in Academic Affairs. First, the Dean of the College of Business and Technology search effort is being chaired by Dean Bonnie Smith-Skripps. The search for the Dean of University Libraries is being chaired by Dean Inessa Levi.

Dean James Huesmann is currently chairing the search for the Director of International Studies. After his departure, Dean Fred Ebeid will step in. The search for the Director of the Honors College is being chaired by Dean Paul Kreider. These are all senior-level searches. We will keep the Board apprised as the searches progress. We will not be interviewing until March of next year.

The First Year Experience continues on track. We are doing well in meeting our goals. Eric Schlosser, the author of *Fast Food Nation*, will be on campus for a speech at 7:00 P.M. on November 9. That will take place in Western Hall and we extend an invitation to Board members if they would like to participate. We are in the process of selecting our book for next year and are reviewing nominations. The criteria is that the subject captures the imagination of the students, that it introduces them to current issues and that it relates to the campus theme.

We are currently working on several classroom upgrades and facilities as well as orchestrating the move from Memorial Hall. The Memorial Hall project will begin shortly and will take several years.

We have also been engaged in some turn-around activities. One particular one is in International Studies, and especially in the Western's English as a Second Language (WESL) program. WESL was losing about \$80,000 a year. They have done a number of things, including increased recruiting, and this year we are in the black and will make a nice profit. We will report at some point on the very successful career fairs abroad that tracks 40 to 50 students into WESL—paying and all fully funded. It is an exciting venture for the campus.

President Goldfarb noted that we have gotten wonderful media attention for our "Friends in Chemistry" program. That has been state-wide attention primarily because of the uniqueness of the program. Board members may have noted the recent press. (Kerry Yadgar added that copies of recent articles will be sent to the Board next week in the weekly update.)

Trustee Houston asked if the lecture by Eric Schlosser will be video taped. If so, the trustees might enjoy receiving copies.

Provost Rallo said he will see that trustees do receive a copy of the program.

In response to a question about facility upgrades, Provost Rallo noted that starting about a year or more ago Vice President Thompson began putting about \$100,000+ a year into upgrades. There was not a lot of communication between that side and Academic Affairs. We have now fixed that. We have a good group chaired by Judi Dallinger and they are prioritizing needs based on input from the faculty, chairs, deans and directors. We make a list for allocating the dollars. This year we have three upgrades we are doing. Every year we try to make something better.

Trustee Houston asked if the Board could see before and after photos.

#### **General Comments by Vice Presidents (Continued)**

Vice President Thompson added that it is impressive to see the before and after comparisons. The room in Browne Hall that Dean Kreider did is just amazing. We still have a lot left to do on campus. The Browne Hall upgrade would be a nice tour at some point if we could arrange that.

In response to a question about the FYE program, Dr. Rallo replied things have been going very well. It is a good relationship between Academic Affairs and Student Services and is tying

classroom learning to out-of-class activities like civic engagement and community service. Students I have spoken to tell me they really enjoy the experience and the ability to have a small liberal arts feel to those classes as they introduce themselves to the campus. We will be back to the Board in the spring with a little tweaking, but it will remain much as we have been doing this semester.

Vice President Johnson stated that there will be an ongoing evaluation and solicitation of student feedback on how things are going and of ideas they have to improve the program.

Provost Rallo added that we have the program embedded into the academic curriculum. The FYE classes are part of our general education classes. Many other campuses have used them as a separate class and we chose not to go down that road. It is an expectation of the class, in addition to the FYE portion, that the students read the selected text and participate in campus discussions. It is difficult to tell how many have actually read the book, but we are setting that expectation.

Vice President Johnson said they have just finished interviews for the Director of Disability Support Services. By next week we should be able to name a new director. When that person arrives on campus we will bring them to a Board meeting so you can meet them.

We will also begin the process of searching for a Director of Admissions. Former Director Karen Helmers agreed to come back for this year. Karen has done another outstanding job. We will also begin searching for a Director of Beu Health Center. Pat has retired and has also come back to serve this year to make certain that our self insurance program gets started on the right foot.

We mentioned the possibility of a January Board meeting to address both the elevator and sprinkler systems in order to get those projects moving forward. At the same time we will probably be asking that the Board approve our Auxiliary Facilities Bond Resolution so that we can move forward with borrowing. The COPS piece was done first to take advantage of the best interest rates. We had the two bond rating meetings—with Moody and Standard and Poor—and we ended up with the same bond rating that we had for the bond side. This is very good and should help us get a good rate on our bonds when we are ready to sell those.

One of the things we are looking at is a possible expansion of the student rec center. We would like to use part of those dollars for that as our rec center is at full capacity. We will, of course, work with students to make certain they are supportive and then will put bond money into that as well. We try very hard to put in programs and opportunities for students to participate in that do not involve bars and other venues. The rec center is a significant part of our positive

#### **General Comments by Vice Presidents (Continued)**

program and we need to make certain we have adequate facilities to do that. We will have some additional discussions on that project. As I said, it will be a matched project.

Trustee Ehlert asked about bond ratings. What is the scale and how did we do?

Vice President Johnson responded that Moody and Standard and Poor are the two companies. We received an A- rating from Standard and Poor. Moody gave us a 2-A rating, which is the same. We consider these very good ratings.

#### **Motion to Adjourn**

There being no further business to come before the Academic and Student Services Committee, a motion was made and duly processed to adjourn the meeting at 10:16 A.M.

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