

OPEN FORUM MINUTES

October 30, 2007
2:30 pm

101B Olscamp Hall

Panelists: Shirley Baugher, VPAA; Sandra MacNevin, Legislative Representative; Patrick Pauken, Senate Chair; Sherideen Stoll, VPFA; Ellen Williams, Senate Vice Chair; Rich Hebein Senate Secretary

The idea for this forum grew out of discussions between the VPAA and SEC; this forum replaces the regularly scheduled SEC meeting. About 150 attended. The video is available at:

<http://qtss.bgsu.edu:8080/bgsu/provostforum/> .

Pauken called the meeting to order at 2:35 pm.

State Level Events Affecting Public Higher Education

MacNevin reported that legislation passed in May changed the administrative structure from a system run by the Ohio Board of Regents who hired the chancellor. Now the governor appoints the chancellor who is advised by OBOR. The University System of Ohio now consists of thirteen universities, twenty-four branch campuses, one “free-standing” medical school and twenty-three two-year campuses. The new University of Toledo is now the third largest institution in the system.

Funding at BGSU

Stoll gave an update on financial issues facing the University. She said that supporting the academic mission was central. She gave a historical overview of the change in support from the state, which is now only 31% of the University’s budget. She also observed that total dollars from the state were down. Although increases are projected for the next two years, universities will not be allowed to raise tuition and fees, and the state expects “demonstrated efficiencies” from the universities. Tuition is rising faster at public institutions because of declining state support. She said that the University would not implement across-the-board cuts to reduce its deficit. She said that we have a hold on vacant positions and that she did not expect any large-scale layoffs. She said that financial planning needed to address deferred maintenance, capital planning, operating budgets and an enrollment management plan.

Academic Planning at BGSU

Baugher said that there was a Strategic Positioning Group, which met last spring. Currently, there is the University Working Group, and a Strategic Planning Group will be convened in spring. The UWG will pull together the institution’s planning documents and draft a plan focusing on being a low cost provider, offering quality instruction and defining a niche position. Since all universities do the same thing basically, mission differentiation has to be based on quality. She observed that the operating budgets have not been increased since 1995 and that they are significantly under funded.

She said that the Chancellor’s “non-negotiables” were that higher education should have a significant role in the economic development of the state, that universities should provide basic instruction but not remedial work, that BGSU was a public, residential, selective, liberal arts, regional university, and that the funding formula for universities change.

Questions

Pauken opened the floor for questions. “How does the University System of Ohio relate to the private institutions?” MacNevin said that there would be more cooperation between the public and private institutions. For example, privates could compete in STEM fields if they have a public partner.

“How is this current exercise not just political expediency?” Baugher acknowledged that we have been through exercises like this before but that now we have to change structurally.

“If education is moving from a social, individual good to an economic good, how does that affect our future, especially regarding the contribution of the liberal arts to economic development?” MacNevin said that the funding

may change and that retaining students would be part of that. Baugher said that she could relate everything we do to economic development providing we document it.

“If we have a ‘differentiated mission,’ how will that affect graduate education?” Baugher said that she did not yet know what any specific recommendations would look like and that a lot of consultation was necessary. She said that graduate education would be reviewed by a committee yet to be appointed.

“We have interdisciplinary connections between academic and student affairs, like the program in College Student Personnel. What is the process and scope for determining centers of excellence?” Baugher said that there were non-academic indicators of excellence to judge programs like this and the Values Initiative.

“What are the criteria for determining quality?” Baugher said that some like retention and time to graduation have already been defined and that we would have to establish others. The state defines some; we define some; the faculty defines some.

“Due to less of an emphasis on STEM areas here, are we ‘off-the-hook’ because we are in our own special category?” MacNevin said that we are not “off-the-hook” because we have to relate to the workforce needs of the state.

“Pragmatically speaking, we are being described as residential and fairly traditional. What about non-traditional students? MacNevin said that any center of excellence needs to consider this, and it will have to be examined.

“What about our residence halls?” Stoll said that we need a comprehensive, thirty-year plan for the residence halls and dining facilities and that the University would issue bonds consistent with that.

“If there have been no increases in the operating budgets since 1995, where did the money go?” Stoll said that she suspected that the money went to compensation, utilities, scholarships, mandated increases and the infrastructure.

“Regarding retention, what is feasible?” Baugher said that she did not know and that she would like to hear from faculty on this.

“How will the mandated efficiencies be calculated? Will anything be passed back to students?” Stoll said that the Board of Regents has determined how amounts should be counted and that the efficiencies were not intended to be returned to students. She added that we were not permitted to raise tuition and fees.

Respectfully submitted,

Rich Hebein, Secretary