

ARKANSAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
Special Meeting
January 29, 2009

Minutes of Meeting

The Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board held a special meeting on Thursday, January 29, 2009 at the Cooperative Extension Service Center in Little Rock. Chairman Leech called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. with a quorum present.

Coordinating Board present:

David Leech, Chair
Dr. Lynda Johnson, Secretary
Dr. Charles Allen
Bob L. Burns
Dr. Olin Cook
Phil Ford
Dr. Dan Grant
Kaneaster Hodges

Coordinating Board absent:

Dr. Joe Bennett
Jodie Carter
Steve Luef

Department staff present:

Dr. Jim Purcell, Director
Dr. Steve Floyd, Deputy Director
Dr. Karen Wheeler, Associate Director for Academic Affairs
Dr. Stanley Williams, Senior Associate Director for Finance
Rick Jenkins, Associate Director for Planning and Accountability
Brooks Harrington, Assistant Director for Planning and Accountability
Cynthia Moten, Coordinator of Academic Programs
Jeanne Jones, Coordinator of Academic Programs
Zanette Douglas, Coordinator of Institutional Certification
Jeanie Toombs, Data Research Accountability Coordinator
Ashley Pettingill, Coordinator of Institutional Finance
Charlette Moore, Coordinator of Institutional Finance
Chandra Robinson, Financial Manager
Dale Ellis, Communications Officer
Nichole Abernathy, Administrative Support

Presidents, chancellors, institutional representatives, members of the press, and guests were also present.

Chairman Leech thanked presidents and chancellors for attending the Special Board meeting and invited everyone to share in a reception/dinner hosted by

Arkansas Business Publishing Group and Capsearch, immediately following the adjournment of the meeting.

Agenda Item No. 1
Appointment of Nominating Committee

Chairman David Leech appointed members of the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board nominating committee. The nominating committee will recommend Board officers for 2009-10 at the January 30 meeting. The members included: Kaneaster Hodges (Chair), Dr. Dan Grant and Dr. Lynda Johnson.

Agenda Items No. 2 - 4
State Rankings, Measuring Up Report Card 2008,
and Legislative Updates

Dr. Purcell began by breaking down Arkansas's rankings. He noted that Arkansas is second in the nation in the percentage of grandparents responsible for their grandchildren, seventh in the percentage of people 65 years and over below the poverty level, and second in the percentage of people 65 years and over with a disability. Arkansas has an aging population. Will Arkansas be able to meet their care and health needs, and how does/will this impact our workforce asked Dr. Purcell.

Dr. Purcell explained that at the other end of the spectrum, Arkansas is third in the nation in the percentage of children under 18 years old below the poverty level and sixteenth in the percentage of households with one or more people under 18 years old. Arkansas has a large population of young people and many of them live in poverty said Dr. Purcell. The question is will we prepare them with the skills necessary to enable social and economic success?

After providing more statistics, Dr. Purcell said that Arkansas has to produce more adults with degrees even though the resources aren't readily available. Low tuition, enhanced scholarships and incentives are a couple of things that Arkansas can do, said Dr. Purcell.

Dr. Purcell said that Arkansas has made strides in preparing young people for college, though compared with other states its performance is only fair. While high school students have improved substantially on Advanced Placement tests, their scores still remain low. He noted that the Measuring Up 2008 State Report Card on Higher Education gives Arkansas an F for affordability. The report states that poor and working-class families must devote 24% of their income, even after aid, to pay for costs at public four-year colleges. However, Arkansas is the best-performing state in the share of income needed to pay for public two-year colleges.

Arkansas is currently producing 11,186 bachelor degrees per year and at this rate of production Arkansas will have 337,256 citizens with bachelor's degrees by 2015, explained Dr. Purcell. However, to reach the SREB average, Arkansas must increase the current production of bachelor's degrees by 64% (7,098 more graduates per year).

Dr. Purcell said that Arkansas can do plenty to improve our performance. More accountability, oversight, repercussions, incentives connected to student success, remove impediments to student success, and target particular workforce needs, to name a few.

Dr. Steve Floyd provided an update on the legislative session noting that ADHE has been heavily involved in the lottery scholarship legislation. After reviewing filed bills related to higher education, Dr. Purcell gave an overview of the House Economic Stimulus package.

Dr. Joel Anderson asked if ADHE could ask legislators to add in the language that if one of the lottery scholarships has leftover money at the end of the year, ADHE wouldn't be required to go back to the legislators to move the funds from one scholarship fund to another.

Dr. Alan Sugg commented that he believes Dr. Purcell is moving in the right direction in terms of being more productive and producing more degrees. However, it seems like all anyone ever hears is bad things about higher education in Arkansas. He noted that there has been a steady growth in the number of Bachelor and Associate degrees awarded in Arkansas since 1998. In closing, Dr. Sugg stated that every once in awhile, it's good to hear some good news about the progress made in Arkansas higher education. Dr. Lynda Johnson thanked Dr. Sugg for bringing some positive information.

Several AHECB members voiced concern regarding the lottery scholarship funding. Dr. Purcell explained that ADHE staff have been doing projections for the Governor's Office and are doing everything possible to make sure that there is enough aid for the program to be successful.

With no further comments, the meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Nichole Abernathy

APPROVED:

Dr. Lynda Johnson, Secretary