



State of Connecticut

HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE

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Planning Commission for Higher Education

Meeting Minutes

July 9, 2013

3:00 p.m. Room 1E

The meeting was called to order at 3:09 p.m. by Judy Resnick.

The following Commission members/designees/guests were present:

Hedley Freake, Lois Schneider, John Bennett, Judith Resnick, John Shemo, Judith Goldfarb, Braden Hosch, Lindy Lee Gold, Judith Greiman, Roberta Willis, Benjamin Barnes, Mun Choi, and Sally Reis.

The minutes from the last meeting were approved.

Members introduced themselves.

John Harnick from the Office of Legislative Management gave an update on the RFP.

Monnica Chan, Director of Policy & Research at the New England Board of Higher Education gave a presentation on "Mapping the Landscape: A Regional and National Perspective on Higher Education in Connecticut."

Lindy Gold asked if there is a correlation between student internship and retention.

Monnica Chan responded that she doesn't have hard data on this. She brought up a parallel to service learning, which has been shown to increase student persistence.

Mun Choi brought up that internship does increase persistence and produced additional income for students.

Judy Resnick added that businesses see internships as hiring pools.

Sally Reis commented that for Pell Grant, high poverty, first generation students that study abroad programs contribute to student persistence and graduation.

Roberta Willis asked the Office of Legislative Research to look at study abroad information for the commission regarding what is offered state wide at public and private institutions and how many students participate.

John Bennett discussed sense of purpose. He believes that this also adds to persistence.

Hedley Freake asked if NEBHE has any data on the influence of gender, race, ethnicity, and subject of study within New England.

Monnica Chan indicated that NEBHE is working on this. She shared that with regard to gender, that the gender gap has flipped, more women than men are attaining their degrees. Monica said a concern is how can we support men, in particular, low income men of color. She shared that the southern New England states are more ethnically diverse than the northern New England states.

Braden Hosch shared that there are large gaps regarding race, ethnicity, and gender.

Judy Goldfarb asked about data regarding sharing faculty across institutions.

Monnica Chan indicated that the practice of sharing faculty and degree programs is increasing.

Judy Resnick asked if we count students coming back to 2 year college, not for degrees, but to take specific classes for work.

Braden Hosch replied that among entering students at community colleges 85 % intend to earn a credential. This does not include non-credit students.

John Shemo asked if there is data on the percent of students who drop out after 1 semester or 1 year.

Monnica Chan shared that there is a student retention number.

Mun Choi agreed and stated that UCONN has a first year retention rate of about 93%, which is fairly high nationally among public universities.

John Bennett discussed first year experience course results, including that about 1/3 of the class had never made a conscience decision to go to college. He shared that some students wished we had the gap year similar to what is done in England.

Judy Resnick asked if retention information is collected by age demographics, and if there is a persistence difference between younger students and more mature students.

Braden Hosch commented that at UCONN most students are coming directly from high school, but community colleges and state universities have this data, and that the more mature students generally do 5-7% better.

Roberta Willis asked if there is information to compare financial aid in different states.

Monnica Chan indicated that it is difficult to find information regarding how financial policy is structured and the impact on student completion. She indicated that she can get examples from various states, but that it is difficult to compare state to state.

Ben Barnes asked if there is data on tuition rate affordability and retention.

Monnica Chan has seen surveys that indicate cost is a factor in student dropout rates. She also shared the challenge in this because every student receives a different aid package.

Sally Reis brought up that academic preparation should be added to the conversation.

Braden Hosch discussed self-reported high school GPA and graduation rate. Students with excellent grades in high school had an 80% graduation rate, and that as the GPA dropped the graduation rate dropped.

Roberta Willis asked about non-Pell vs. Pell effects in community colleges and 4 year institutions; how does that compare to a regional average or national average?

Braden Hosch replied that there are no national comparisons yet.

Judy Resnick asked if NEBHE looked at student debt levels, especially for students who did not complete their degree work.

Monnica Chan responded that debt levels affect life style choices and are tied to state economies. The Project on Student Debt has put out a release that looks at student debt levels on average across the country. This is a voluntary survey and can be found at http://projectonstudentdebt.org/state_by_state-data.php.

Mun Choi mentioned that nationally student debt is about \$26,000 and that in CT it averages to about \$28,000. He shared that in CT, Yale has the lowest at about \$6,000 and University of Bridgeport has the highest. UCONN is about \$23,000.

Monnica Chan added that those debt levels are for the graduating senior class. She compared debt levels with salaries showing that even with a low debt, if the student has trouble finding a job, the debt won't be paid off.

Braden Hosch discussed the properties of borrowing.

Judy Resnick asked if debt is part of the retention problem.

Multiple people joined this discussion.

Mun Choi advised the commission that the majority of full time students pursuing a Ph.D. are supported by the university either as a teaching assistant, research assistant or graduate assistant. Graduate assistants receive a stipend as well as tuition. The medical school students and law school students take out loans.

Monnica Chan commented that with regard to student loans affecting student persistence that financial aid packages are given out on an annual basis and the student may or may not receive financial aid

year to year. She said that we need to think about some of the structures we have in place and how they affect students, how are we limiting students' ability to think and plan ahead.

Roberta Willis asked if CT typical with community college students not taking out loans.

Monnica Chan replied that low income families are less likely to take out loans than middle income families. Culturally loans are more manageable for certain parts of the population in terms of understanding what they are about.

Braden Hosch brought up that community colleges have often been reticent to participate in the student federal loan program because if their default rate gets too high it puts their Title IV participation at risk.

Judy Resnick asked for suggestions of ideas for the next meeting.

Judy Goldfarb asked if the commission members could have the information that they need for their baseline so that they know where they're moving from. What are we measuring, where are we starting from and where are we moving to?

Judy Resnick indicated that the consultant will be charged with collecting that data for the commission members.

Roberta Willis said that part of the committee's work is to set goals, where do we want to be in 2020, where should we be in terms of completion and how we're going to get there.

Judy Resnick let the commission members know that the next meeting is set for Tuesday, August 13th.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:29 p.m.