

**Joint Planning and Budget Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, April 23, 2020
8:30 – 10:30 a.m., Virtual Meeting via Teams**

ATTENDEES:

Voting Members

Sondra Aman
Mike Andriatch
James Cordeiro
Frances Dearing
Kandie Gay
Daniel Goebel
Scott Haines
Tom Hernandez
Katy Heyning
Sara Kelly
Jose Maliekal
Dave Mihalyov
Kathy Peterson
Summer Reiner
Craig Ross
Ed Ryan
Elliot Weininger
Katy Wilson
Jim Zollweg

Non-Voting Members

Crystal Hallenbeck
Cathy Houston-Wilson
President Macpherson
Karen Riotto
Jim Wall: Co-Chair
Melissa Wight

Guests

Lorraine Acker
Steve Cook
Bob Cushman
Eileen Daniel
Richard Dirmyer
Peter Dowe
Mike Harrison
Kevin Rice

REGRETS:

Voting Members

Meaghan Irving

Non-Voting Members

Denise Copelton: Co-Chair (on sabbatical)

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m.

Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Wall asked the committee to review the minutes from the March 26 meeting. Dr. Peterson motioned the minutes to be approved, Mr. Haines seconded the motion and all present voting members were in favor. Therefore, the minutes were approved.

Middle States Self-Study Update – presented by Frances Dearing, Director of Assessment

(Note: PowerPoint Presentation is available on Blackboard and Microsoft Teams)

Ms. Dearing presented an update to committee members on the Middle States Self-Study. There were no questions, but many members thanked Ms. Dearing for all of her hard work and information.

Excelsior Scholarship – presented by Peter Dowe, Registrar

(Note: PowerPoint Presentation is available on Blackboard.)

Mr. Dowe presented information on the Excelsior Scholarship. The following questions, answers and discussion points occurred during the presentation:

- The question was raised regarding if there is a certain GPA that a student needs to maintain for the Excelsior Scholarship. Mr. Dowe stated that there is not a certain GPA a student needs to maintain. A student just needs to earn 30 degree applicable credits a year to be in compliance.
- A comment was made that it is believed that the State budget that was recently passed did not include raising the family income level requirement for Excelsior, it is believed that it will remain at \$125,000.
- The question was raised if the recent policy change for satisfactory/unsatisfactory grades would have any impact on Excelsior. Mr. Dowe stated that it will not have any impact. Additionally, HESC is coming out with guidance that if a student is impacted by COVID-19, we will be able to say they are in compliance. The students that we would normally decertify at the end of this year, we may be able to certify and allow them to keep the scholarship for another year. We are just waiting for additional information on what documentation is needed from the student in order to provide that exception.
- The question was raised if students are required to apply for Excelsior before they are allowed to apply for other financial aid. Mr. Dowe stated that the way New York State has set up the application process, students must apply for the FASFA and then a student must apply for TAP and then the Excelsior Scholarship. The reason New York State set it up this way is that they want to take into consideration the other forms of grants to reduce the amount of money that they are going to pay out through the Excelsior Scholarship. Students only need to apply for Excelsior one time, but they must apply for TAP every year. HESC uses the TAP application as a way to determine the adjusted family income.
- The question was raised if there are any campus requirements indicating that a student must apply for Excelsior before they can apply for a campus scholarship. Mr. Dowe stated the student could just apply for the campus scholarship. There could be students who know they are not eligible for TAP or Excelsior and just skip that process.
- The concern was raised that with transfer students and programs that are “block step” it can be difficult to have a student complete a degree in four years, does this pose a problem for Excelsior. Mr. Dowe stated that he reviews the degree audit to make sure the courses are counting towards the degree and if they are completing 30 credits. There will be students that fall out of step with these “block programs”, but we are not going to decertify them because they are counting on this money.
- The question was raised if students can fail to meet the requirements of Excelsior if they choose to change a major. Mr. Dowe stated that yes, a student can fail to meet the requirements. If a student is a junior and they change their major, they may force themselves out of the program because they cannot stay on track to graduate. The good thing about our program is that we have common general education and college requirements, so that courses taken for those requirements always apply to the degree. It is the major specific courses that vary.

- The question was raised regarding the requirement to be a New York State resident and converting to a ten-year interest rate loan and is HESC overseeing this. Mr. Dowe stated that HESC is responsible for overseeing this.
- The question was raised if students complete 18 credits a semester, totaling 36 for a year, is there a process they need to complete to transfer those extra credits to count towards a different year. Mr. Dowe stated that the student's account is reviewed to make sure they have completed 30 credits. If a student has not, they look to see if the student has "banked" credits from high school or extra credits from previous years. The last thing his office wants to do is to decertify a student because it will have implications for the current semester plus the future. It is a lot of money for the students.
- The question was raised if the 1212 number meant there were 1212 students receiving Excelsior this year. Mr. Dowe stated 1212 students are receiving it this semester.
- The question was raised if it is possible to calculate how many students could be eligible for the program to ensure we are maximizing what our students could get from this program. Mr. Dowe stated that we do have students that are academically and income eligible, but they are receiving PELL and TAP.
- The question was raised regarding how much decertification occurs during a given year. Mr. Dowe stated they have decertified approximately 100-125 students each year.
- The question was raised if the decertifying was due to students not completing enough credits or they may fail courses. Mr. Dowe stated that is the reason. He cannot state the number of students that are decertified due to an income change because HESC handles that.
- The question was raised regarding students mentioning the paperwork is confusing and the deadlines are challenging, is this something we can address on our end. Mr. Dowe stated without knowing what paperwork the students are referring to it is difficult to answer that question. Students only have to apply for Excelsior one time. They may be referring to FASFA and TAP as they do have to apply for these every year. These forms can be tedious. As for the deadlines, we want students to complete them as soon as possible but there are some students filling out financial aid applications into the fall semester for that year. It is a timing issue as it does take several weeks for those forms to be processed.
- The question was raised if the family income rate that was phased over three years included inflation or was just a number developed by the legislator. Mr. Dowe stated he was not aware that the income rate factored in inflation and believed it was a number developed by legislator.

Goal Group Budget Updates

Mr. Wall provided the committee with Goal Group budget updates. The following question and answer occurred during the presentation:

- The question was raised regarding what the does deferred mean when it comes to the Starfish program. Dr. Wilson stated that is the second piece of the Starfish Analytics. We are piloting it for SUNY System. SUNY is funding it. It was supposed to start last July, but it didn't start until almost the spring semester. We believe with the delayed start, that the funding will be extended for at least another year so we are deferring any kind of investment there.

Other Items from the Committee

The following items were discussed by committee members:

- The concern was raised regarding the directive the courses that currently have low enrollment and being taught by adjuncts will be put on hold. Dr. Heyning stated that there appears to be a misunderstanding. She stated that her directive to the associate deans to review all courses that are going to be taught in the fall. Those courses that are fully enrolled, we will find an instructor for. Those that are not fully enrolled, we are managing the best we can and monitoring those enrollment numbers as we go forward. If we see a need, we will hire an adjunct. It is premature to hire all the adjuncts we had last fall because we do not know what our enrollment will be. It is not that we aren't hiring individuals, it is that we are monitoring enrollment as we are hiring people. Dr. Houston-Wilson stated she understood the delay in hiring individuals, her concern is putting courses on hold that typically fill up later in the summer or by transfer students. She wants to ensure that courses are available for students to enroll in especially since her area's numbers are consistent. President Macpherson stated that our transfer numbers are down but it could be that in certain areas they are not. This means we should do a granular look as we review the courses. Our biggest concern right now is that students may or may not return in the fall if we are still in a remote learning environment. Due to the COVID-19 situation we cannot use past practice to rely on what future practice will be. Provost Heyning stated that she is not asking for courses to be put on hold that are typically taught by adjuncts. What we are asking is to fill those courses and as soon as we have enough enrollment in the course, we will hire the adjunct. It is acceptable for chairs to reach out to adjuncts and let them know that you think you have a course for them to teach, what the current enrollment is and for them to check back with you in a couple weeks. We just don't know what the enrollment will be in the fall as we don't know if we will still be doing remote learning. What we don't want to do is hire someone to turn around a lay them off because of low enrollment.
- The question was raised regarding our enrollment numbers and if all area colleges are experiencing the same or if we are in a unique situation. President Macpherson stated that all Rochester college presidents would be meeting next week to discuss enrollment and fall plans. The SUNY presidents meet twice a week to discuss various issues to do with enrollment and planning for the fall. We are not in a unique situation. If you look at the chronicle of higher education, these concerns are across the board not just in our nation but worldwide.
- President Macpherson extended her appreciation in advance as the committee will be doing some difficult work as we work through many of these issues in regard to low enrollment and COVID-19.
- The question was raised if SUNY campuses are receiving any funding through the CARES Act. President Macpherson stated that SUNY is managing that process for us and we are receiving guidance from SUNY. Mr. Wall stated it is being managed centrally and funding that is being earmarked for campuses will also be managed centrally through SUNY and we don't know what the distribution of that will be.
- Mr. Wall stated that the plan for our next meeting is to share the Five-Year Financial Model and some of the initiatives that we need to work on that President Macpherson mentioned earlier. The next few weeks will be information sharing and your input and ideas as we work through next steps.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Next Meeting: May 7, 2020; 8:30-10:30 a.m.

JW/mw