

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Lisa Benlon at 3:30 p.m. on January 10, 2001 in Room 231-N of the Capitol.

All members were present.

Committee staff present: Carol Rampey, Research
Paul West, Research
Stuart Little, Research
Avis Swartzman, Revisor
Dee Woodson, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Dr. Kim Wilcox, Executive Dir., Kansas Board of Regents
Dr. Clay Blair, Chairman of the Kansas Board of Regents

Chairperson Benlon opened the meeting by referring Committee members to the copies of the Committee Rules that each member received, explained how absences would be handled, and expressed the need for members to contact her if they are unable to be present at scheduled meetings.

The Chairperson then introduced Dr. Kim Wilcox, Executive Director of the Kansas Board of Regents. Dr. Wilcox expressed his appreciation to the Chair for the invitation to appear before the Committee and give an overview of the State Board. He introduced Clay Blair, Chairman of the Board, and from Olathe and Jean Hampton from Dodge City, who is a member of the Board and is Chairperson of the Commission on Community Colleges and Vocational Technical Education. He also introduced the Board office staff present: Mary Prewitt, General Council; Amanda Goldbeck, Director of Academic Affairs; Joe Birmingham, Deputy Executive Director; Eric King, Director of Facilities; Marvin Burris, Fiscal Officer; and Dick Carter, Director of External Relations. Dr. Wilcox noted also that there were two state institutional presidents in attendance for the Committee meeting, and they were Donald Beggs of Wichita State University and Ed Hammond of Ft. Hays State University.

Dr. Wilcox handed out an outline covering the Board of Regents, and explained the makeup of the Board, how it is organized and its functions. He explained the history of the Board which was a constitutional entity in Kansas beginning in 1925 through 1999 had the responsibility of governing the six state universities. Dr. Wilcox said that the Kansas Board of Regents was seen as being a model of university governments since they were one board for six schools, and it did not have the redundancy of six individual boards. He elaborated that the board that was relatively A-political, policy focused and not management focused, and it did the coordination job between the six universities in terms of care and maintenance of programs and avoiding duplication in the rest. He said that during those years the board also supervised the funding for Washburn University and continues in that role, as well as the responsibility for the State Student Financial Aid Programs and other State Higher Education Policies. (Attachment 1)

Dr. Wilcox testified that a year and a half ago the Kansas Higher Education Coordination Act added to the board's responsibility the supervision of the community colleges and technical schools as well as the coordination responsibility for all of the schools. He said that Kansas had never had a coordinating body, and those responsibilities now rest with the Board of Regents; so they had two things happening simultaneously. He stated that a history of coordination needs that were not met, which the board is now working to address; and the duality of being both a coordinating board in trying to be objective and fair with 37 schools with different levels of affiliation, and at the same time being the advocate for those six schools which it is the governing board. Dr. Wilcox said that the Act also specifically charged the Board of Regents with developing a unified post secondary education budget, and to also develop a comprehensive plan for coordination.

Dr. Wilcox shared with the Committee the selected accomplishments to date as outlined on his handout which included: organization of the Board and creation of three commissions, integration of KSDE staff and operations, development of communication processes among campuses/sectors, reconceive administrative procedures combining two robust cultures of the community colleges and the universities and their former relationships with the Board of Regents, integration of legislative relations across sectors, establishment of Joint Council of Chief Academic Officers consisting of 37 members, have articulation agreements between all the technical schools and community colleges and similarly between the community colleges and the universities, creation of a single web site and links for distance learning and have course equivalency maps, submission of consolidated budgets the last two years, and are currently working on developing a unified budget for 2003. Dr. Wilcox said that to develop a unified budget involves two key components to be successful. He stated the first was to insure up front that all of the parties have a chance to discuss similar kinds of issues and components whereas each school will come and talk to the Board about the needs and challenges they see in the 2003 fiscal year, and the Board has a chance to discuss with the schools what kinds of constraints they foresee in that fiscal year. Dr. Wilcox said that another part of the budget was finding ways to create budget incentives that are appropriate to institutions, and comparable among the schools so the Regents only have one budget document to work with and from. He testified that they had at least five fundamentally different kinds of funding mechanisms for our 37 schools.

Dr. Wilcox explained his item on his handout entitled Institutional Research which involves **SB 345** that stated the Board of Regents would create a post-secondary database. He said that in the past that Kansas did not have a single system for tracking students due to Federal Privacy Rules which prevents the unauthorized transfer of student information from one school to another, and with the two different supervisory boards, the Board of Education and Board of Regents, there was some question about the legalities of having a single system for this purpose. He further stated that the Legislature last year had the wisdom to provide the resources to build the database, and they are for the first time creating that system at the Board office. He briefly talked about reconceptualizing the role of the Board of Regents in that they are looking for ways to move the system and the state ahead, and economic development which means more opportunities in the future for Kansas citizens.

Dr. Wilcox stated that in the Governor's recent budget recommendations they received various policy recommendations for the six state agencies, but without funding to implement them. He said the other 31 schools have received funding, but did not receive policy recommendations by the nature of the fact they report to separate governing boards and have a different set of expectations. He testified that this was being shared with the Committee to underscore the difficulty in creating a system where different groups have different sets of responsibilities and different sets of expectations internally, and more importantly, publicly within the state. He said that once they get through the reality of how they deal with the dollars which they are concerned about, they will have to step back and determine how they can insure that these kinds of challenges are minimized in the future to maintain the integrity of the system.

Dr. Wilcox introduced Dr. Clay Blair, Chairman of the Board of Regents, who talked to the Committee regarding what the Board of Regents is trying to do to fulfil what was set out in **SB 345** which mandated changes in higher education, and to also look at the whole process of higher education in a visionary way. The Board Chairman said they would come forward with a plan that they can evolve over a period of a few years because they know that funding is crucial. He commented on the challenge of combining the two cultures of the Board of Education and the Regent's Office. He explained how they function as a team, communicate with each other, give and take from each other, and by doing that they create trust. He said he feels that if they pursue the same thing in working with the Legislature, that trust can be established and the working relationship be more effective. Dr. Blair stated they have another idea they have stressed since the new Board has come into being was that while they look to the Legislature for funding, they have to be more self-reliant and looked for alternative sources themselves.

Dr. Blair testified that a third of the money for higher education comes from tuition, one third is from the State, and a third of it comes from outside sources which includes research grant money, endowments, and grants from Washington D.C. He said next month they were calling together the Kansas Congressional Delegation to meet with the Board of Regents and talk and explore with them creative ways to get more Washington federal funding because their individual schools do something on their own, but they want to collectively look at what they can do better and set definable goals to get more money and become proactive.

Dr. Blair said the idea of the team, communication and trust concept and the idea of looking for other sources of money are two aspects of their plan. He stated the third aspect is decision making, and the Board tells their

presidents to look at any decision they have to make and evaluate whether it can be expanded into a collaborative effort or partnership with others, then they could do more. He said they should check to see if the decision was efficient and is there more accountability. He shared with the Committee the initiatives they are focusing on at the present time which included (1) block grants which the revenue is neutral; (2) how can they get their institution to work better together - Board has decided to go to an outside consultant or national study to get a road map of criteria for making these affiliations and partnerships work; and (3) creation of a 501C-3 nonprofit foundation.

Dr. Blair said one of the biggest problems facing the Board of Regents was global change or global technology and the funding of it, and it requires funding to keep up. He commented that the second biggest problem was student aid which has not been increased in years, and yet all of the members on the Board of Regents agrees that there are many students yet that slip through the cracks that could benefit from a technical school education, from a community college, or from a university experience. He said the third element of the way the Board of Regents currently functions is that it is basically a conduit agency between the Legislature and the universities and community colleges and so on. He went on to say they get a budget from their universities, look at it, stamp it and send it on to the Legislature for handling, and the Board does not have much to say about it. He stated that with the passage of **SB 345** the Legislature has charged the Board of Regents to go out and be innovative, visionary, and come up with a credible strategy that will take the higher education system into the 21st century. Dr. Blair said to accomplish that the Board has to have money to do it. Dr. Blair suggested a possible solution would be to use tax credits whereas companies could donate to the Kansas Board of Regents' non-profit education foundation, and receive a Federal tax deduction plus Kansas tax credits. He further explained how the money would be distributed between the various state institutions, research universities, regional and community colleges, medical schools, technical schools, increased student aid, and some to the Board of Regents for empowerment money for creative innovations.

Dr. Blair closed his remarks by commending Dr. Wilcox and Dr. Birmingham for their leadership and hard work in creating direction and purpose for the Board of Regents. He also complimented his fellow members of the Board of Regents who are very dedicated and hardworking. He said they set the goals as a team, communicated and created trust among themselves as well as with their constituents. He stated that the members of the Board have been out and visited each of their 37 campuses in the state, and three members have been too all of them. Dr. Blair related to the Committee that this is a way of showing the individual schools that they matter and matter a lot, and we as a Board care about them. He thanked the Committee for taking the time to listen to them today, and said he looked forward to working with the Legislative members in the future.

Chairperson Benlon asked each of the Committee members to introduce themselves, give some brief background information, and what their interests are in serving on this Committee.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:35 p.m.

CONTINUATION SHEET