

Higher Education Strategic Information and Governance (HESIG) Policy Steering Council Meeting

June 17, 2015

Meeting Summary

HESIG's Policy Steering Council held its fourth meeting beginning with an informal dinner June 16, and a working session June 17, 2015 at Stockton Seaview Resort. Participating Council members and guests included: Robert Altman, Daniel Bachalis, Kevin Broeker, Peter Caporilli, Henry Coleman, Daniel Douglas, Stanley Ellis, Elizabeth Garlatti, Darryl Greer, Martin Grogan, Dennis Jones, Daniel Julius, Claudine Keenan, Harvey Kesselman, Michael Klein, Larry Nespoli, Richard Novak, Maryam Sarhan, Sharon Schulman, and John Wilson.

Introductions

Darryl Greer, who facilitated the discussion, introduced Council members, and outlined meeting objectives. Acting President Harvey Kesselman greeted the Council, and thanked members for their contributions and support.

Discussion and Advice

The Council was asked to advise on emerging trends affecting New Jersey and national higher education policy; issues that help to define and enhance college value and expected outcomes; and the developing governance role of boards of trustees in managing needed policy change. Agenda, background materials and questions to help guide discussion, as well as Council members' bios, are available at: www.stockton.edu/hughescenter/hesig

In brief summary, the Council's discussion and advice are as follows:

- 1. Trends:** Greer introduced this agenda item by sharing trends identified by the Council at its 2012 inaugural meeting and revisited in prior meetings. Identification of trends helps to inform HESIG's work plan, within its mission. New Jersey policy advocates, Grogan, Klein, Nespoli and Wilson, representing each segment of NJ higher education, led discussion; followed by Jones, who provided insight from a national perspective.

In addition to trends shared with the agenda, including those published by AGB and AASCU, additional insights offered include:

- Continuing loss of state financial support, including reduced appropriations for the senior publics to offset increases in state fringe benefit payments, placing greater dependence on tuition and fee revenue and more pressure to constrain expenditures, thereby leading to greater financial uncertainty for institutions;
- More competition for state dollars for other public funding needs, such as health and pensions;
- More competition among institutions for students as NJ faces a moderate decline in traditional age college bound students;
- Greater need for investment in student financial aid, and higher expectations for college completion;
- A loss of higher education budget and policy experts at the state level;

Increasing need to build partnerships with businesses, and among colleges and universities to meet revenue and college completion goals;
Greater federal pressure regarding academic quality assurance;
Increased state legislative interest in “free college tuition,” especially for community colleges (e.g, TN);
Continuing need for higher education to make a case for its value as a public and private good, especially in light of its ability to adjust to a steady decline in public investment, without demonstrably reducing service;
New legal/regulatory challenges, such as for tax exempt status, royalty and intellectual property, and non business related income.

Much of the discussion focused on institutions setting clear priorities regarding student success and managing scarce resources in an increasingly competitive environment, with constrained resources, and low expectation for new state investment. Council members suggested that student

Board composition/Criteria for appointment: Appointments should be made based on the needs of the institution, and based on recommendations of institutions, to complement roles of sitting trustees; to take into account the diverse constituencies of the institution, as well as to demonstrate an ability to understand the larger regional and state context within which a college works;

Board focus, education and evaluation: Trustees should be committed to self examination, evidence based analysis of outcomes, and should set policy to provide for regular evaluation of its processes. The board should distinguish between short and long term policy issues, and should spend more time on evaluating strategic issues affecting the college's effectiveness. Furthermore, the board should have an explicit trustee education program that helps trustees understand their role, responsibility and priority questions that need to be asked. Boards should be allowed to set criteria