Minutes of the Staff Advisory Committee to the President
April 4, 2013
Craig 108

Attending: Meredith Chance, Susan Hallatt, John Inman, Aron Kuch, Brian McGee (ex officio), Anne McNeal, Amy Orr, Ashleigh Parr, Katherine Pezzella (ex officio), Jennifer Smith, Marcia White, Frank Budd (SAC 2013-14)

Not attending: Elizabeth Dixon, Herbert Frasier, Clara Hodges, Jennifer McClerklin, Ed Pope (ex officio), Marlene Williams

Marcia White called the meeting to order at 10:35 am.

Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the March 14 meeting were distributed and unanimously approved.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

Chair’s Report

Marcia White contacted Brian McGee about President Benson meeting with SAC, and for feedback on the Interim Report which was presented to the president. Marcia read Brian’s email reply which is attached (Appendix A).

Since President Benson will meet with the committee on May 16, we will change the meeting location to the President’s Boardroom. Anne will send a meeting update.

Marcia reported on President Benson’s Town Hall meeting of April 3 (Appendix B). He included a mention of SAC and the Interim Report, and complimented the committee on its work.

During the question and answer period, Aron Kuch raised the question of uneven communication to the staff by the various Executive Vice Presidents. President Benson responded that he was unaware of this and that he would like to speak to Aron about it further.

Marcia pointed out that several divisions are receiving regular communication about topics of interest, so it is not a universal problem. Staff members in Business Affairs, Marketing and Communications, and Institutional Development receive regular news and updates. That suggests the problem is only in either Academic Affairs or Student Affairs, or both. Marcia recommended that the Communication
Subcommittee find out how these two divisions communicate, make recommendations for handling communication better, and share the recommendations with the respective EVPs and the president.

Marcia pointed out that staff members can stay informed by reading the College’s website, especially the press releases, and should figure out how to communicate the website content with people who don’t use computers regularly. Another way to stay informed is by attending Board of Trustees meetings, which are open to everyone. The committees meet on Thursdays, and the full board meets on Fridays on dates which are posted on the Board of Trustees website. If you can’t make the meetings, the minutes are available at trustees.cofc.edu. The next meetings are April 18 and 19. Anyone who wishes to attend, and can take time away from their jobs, should contact Betty Craig at least one week before the meetings. Academic Affairs staff can contact Clara Hodges.

Treasurer’s Report

Anne McNeal said there was no new information to report, and yielded to Brian McGee to report on the College’s budget development process.

Brian commented on the economic impact of higher education as reported at President Benson’s Town Hall meeting: $4.4 billion contributed to the economy by the five largest institutions in Charleston. The College of Charleston’s impact is $542 million, which is behind MUSC but up from the $300 million it contributed in the 2000s.

There will be an Op Ed piece in the April 5 Post and Courier by the five college presidents about how Charleston is a college town.

A merger with MUSC, mentioned at Town Hall, is very preliminary: just a conversation about having a conversation. Such a merger was considered and rejected in 1981 and 1998.

The College’s budget and planning cycle:

The state budget is expected to flat fund higher education for 2013-14, providing the same amount as in 2012-13. The College might also receive one-time money to support a specific project such as renovating the Hollings Science Center.

The Strategic Plan has been minimally revised. Revisions of the 94 tactics have been deferred to next year. The College is currently developing the Annual Action Plan which is based on those tactics and identifies large buckets of money:

1. State and federal mandated spending, e.g. the Affordable Care Act and the salary increases mandated by the state for 2012-13. To comply with the Affordable Care Act, beginning in January 2014, the College must provide health care to temporary employees and adjunct faculty who work 30 or more hours per week. Other increased health care costs will be funded by the College, probably with higher co-pays for employees.
2. Increased costs due to unavoidable inflationary increases, e.g. insurance and building materials. These amounted to $1 million last year.

3. Strategic Plan spending. Last year the College added 1.5% for merit raises for employees in addition to the state’s 3% mandated cost-of-living adjustment, and increased temporary employees’ and adjunct faculties’ compensation. Last year’s Strategic Plan spending also included funding for the new Bachelor of Professional Studies degree program and new employees. Operating budget increases were identified as a need but were not funded.

4. One-time, non-recurring spending such as leasing swing space during renovations and major equipment purchases. Last year’s non-recurring spending included $1 million for IT equipment.

5. Budgetary recommendations that are not in the Annual Action Plan. Last year, $20 million of recommendations were not moved into the Action Plan, an indication that the College has to make tough choices and cannot pay for everything it needs.

Marcia White pointed out that, unlike some other institutions, the College will not change full-time employees to part-time or eliminate temporary or adjunct positions because of the Affordable Care Act.

Brian said that the state Budget and Control Board will probably cap tuition increases.

Brian also noted that any increase in the student population will come from graduate and North Campus students, not downtown undergraduates. Neither will we change the in-state and out-of-state mix of students.

The Annual Plan will be presented to the Board of Trustees April 18. The Sources and Uses document, which itemizes costs and the sources for funding them, will be finalized in May. The Board of Trustees adopts the budget at its June meeting.

Subcommittee Reports

College Relations

Ashleigh Parr has been meeting with the Memminger School steering group. The school will open in July. It is a Race to the Top, non-traditional, competency-based school. It is also a Global Studies School, partnering with the College’s School of Languages, Cultures and World Affairs. The School of Education, Health and Human Performance will host an information session May 7. Attendance at the school is available to anyone in Charleston County. The school will teach children age 3 through 6th grade, and will have a strong affiliation with EHHP’s Early Childhood Development Center. There was discussion about the best way to communicate information about the school to College of Charleston employees.

Ashleigh attended the Faculty Senate meeting where an announcement was made that the College will be in compliance of the requirement that performance evaluations are completed for deans and department chairs.
Ashleigh also announced that the SACS fifth-year interim report was submitted on schedule March 25. (SACS is our accrediting agency.) Peer reviewers will determine whether or not we are meeting the 18 required standards and the decisions about our standing vis-à-vis the requirements will be made by SACS in June.

The Staff Advisory Committee staff member/adjunct representative has been working with the faculty committee addressing adjunct issues.

*Communication*

Anne McNeal distributed the minutes of the most recent subcommittee meeting and the latest revision of the Staff Awards Proposal. Steve Osborne has asked to defer until August submission of the proposal to the Board of Trustees which includes a recommendation to allow cash awards for temporary employees. Therefore, those cash awards have been deleted from the Staff Awards Proposal for this year.

Steve Osborne is taking the awards proposal to the Executive Vice Presidents for consideration. Brian McGee said that the meeting of the EVPs is scheduled for Monday, April 7, and that President Benson will hear the proposal at the same time.

Anne McNeal indicated some urgency in getting the proposal accepted, because the subcommittee would like to open the nominations to the College’s employees April 15.

Meanwhile, work is under way to implement the proposal: Jennifer McClerklin is designing a Qualtrics form for the nominations, along with an FAQ page explaining the process. Jennifer and Susan Hallatt are requesting donations of items to be included in gift baskets to be presented to the award recipients, with nicer items going to temporary employee-of-the-year recipients since they will not receive cash awards. John Inman is working with Marketing and Communications’ photographer to take a photograph of an open gate to be framed and presented to the Open Gates Award recipient. A photo of the recipient standing in the same gate will be presented to the recipient’s department for display.

*Constituent Concerns and Wellness*

This subcommittee had nothing new to report

*Membership*

Meredith Chance asked for certification of the results of the at-large election. A motion was offered and seconded and unanimously approved.

Anne McNeal reported that, of 849 staff members who were eligible to vote, only 124 voted in the at-large election, with one-third of those voting on the final day. Marcia White suggested that the Membership and Communication Subcommittees get together next year to strategize how to increase the number of voters. Jennifer Smith thought the ballot was confusing, and recommended fewer clicks to get to the actual vote.
Meredith will notify the winners and losers. Anne will announce the results and provide a link to the entire membership of the 2013-14 SAC on the allstaff listserv.

Marcia White adjourned the meeting at 12:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne McNeal
Secretary/Treasurer
Staff Advisory Committee to the President
Marcia:

I can give you an update on the meeting request. The President also will be mentioning the SAC report of February 22 in today’s town hall.

On the topic of meetings:

First, the President plans to attend the May 16 SAC meeting, when he share the latest budgetary information for the College. Some of that information should be relevant to the February SAC report.

Second, he will gladly meet with the SAC on two occasions in Fall 2013. He will confer with SAC leadership at the end of that semester to determine how frequently such meetings should take place in the future.

Third, the President wanted to emphasize that the six meetings a year currently scheduled with the Faculty Advisory Committee strike him as too many, based on our current experience. Those meetings occur so regularly that, in his opinion, not enough time has passed to work on more complicated issues from one meeting to the next, so that more time is devoted to works in progress than to frank discussions of new issues. The twice a year he meets with the Faculty Senate might be a better model for the SAC, but he is open to more discussion on this point and looks forward to the May meeting and to the two meetings in the fall.

I look forward to seeing some or all of you at this afternoon’s town hall and at tomorrow’s SAC meeting. Thank you for all you are doing for the College.

Sincerely,

Brian

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Appendix B

SAC President’s Report

April 4, 2013

Important news from President’s Town Hall Meeting, April 3, 2013

1. Charleston Regional Development Alliance:
   • conducted a comprehensive study on the collective economic impacts of public higher education on the regional economy.
   • partnered with College of Charleston, The Citadel, MUSC and Trident Technical College.
   • $4.4 billion in economic impact supporting 41,000 jobs and $2.1 billion in labor income translates to $145.7 million in S.C. tax revenues and approx. 10 percent of the Charleston region’s $28 billion GDP.
   • Press conference on Thursday morning with area college presidents in attendance.

2. SAC
   • Complimented SAC on the important work the committee is doing.
   • In Q&A session, Aron raised the communication problem again – reading news about the College in the newspaper instead of hearing it through appropriate channels in divisions – EVPs to AVPs, etc. This appeared to be news to the President.

   – Because that was the first item in the SAC interim report, I recommend we consider doing the following before the May meeting:

     1. Communication subcommittee should identify which divisions have communication problems (Marketing and Communications, Institutional Advancement and Business Affairs don’t seem to have a problem).

     2. Find out how communication works in divisions where it does.

     3. Take that information and recommend strategies for improving communication in the specific areas where it is lacking.

   – Recommend that SAC members check press releases on College’s website periodically. Media relations posts releases on newsworthy items as soon as they are permitted to do so (either before or at the same time that information goes to the media). Communications subcommittee can recommend strategies for disseminating that information throughout the divisions.
– Every Monday, Mike Robertson sends an electronic version of “In the News” to the campus. Devise methods to make this information available to people who don’t routinely check emails.

– Quarterly Board of Trustees meetings are open to the public. Anyone who wants to attend and can take time away from their job to sit in, should contact Betty Craig a week or two in advance of the meetings; staff who work in Academic Affairs should notify Clara Hodges. Board of Trustees minutes and committee meeting minutes are available at trustees.cofc.edu.

3. The College of Charleston will take over the building where Barton’s and Silver Puffin used to be. The ground floor will become a Visitors’ Center – a Gateway to the College. Upper floors will be turned into meeting and conference spaces. Planned opening is scheduled for January 2014.

4. President Benson announced that the College is involved with MUSC in preliminary conversations about the two institutions merging. He spoke about the increased competition in the Charleston area coming from the approximately 22 for-profits and lately from Clemson and USC, both of which institutions have footprints in our “neighborhood.” He did emphasize that the subject of a merger actually comes up periodically (the last time was in the 1990s), and that the discussions were in very, very early stages.