

Minutes of the CUCAO Strategic Plan Work Session, August 25, 2017

I. Rebecca Turner called the meeting of the Council of University Chief Academic Officers to order at 10:00 a.m.

Dr. Turner provided words of welcome and asked that the Roster be reviewed. It was noted that until a new representative from Alabama State is identified, Dr. Wilson would remain on the Roster.

II. Minutes of the June 8, 2017 meeting were presented for review. The minutes were approved unanimously as amended.

III. Subcommittee on Higher Education's Strategic Plan members Tim Edwards, Daniel Wims, Christine Curtis, and Karyn Gunn with Co-Chairs Kevin Whittaker and David Johnson presented its work thus far for first review. A draft copy was provided to the full membership by email attachment earlier.

Kevin Whittaker began the subcommittee report by revisiting the history, context, and an update on progress. What remains today is to consider priorities, objectives and strategies, and, based on thoughts of the co-chairs, complete what still needs work.

Dr. Whittaker has met with Senator Marsh, who originated the initiative.

Dr. Johnson reported that Dr. Purcell will present his plan "Building Human Capital" September 12 at 2 p.m. in the State House. Superintendent Sentance has developed the K-12 plan and Jimmy Baker the plan for 2-year schools.

This group will develop its plan by some time in November for voluntary adoption by constituent universities. A committee will be appointed to accept the comprehensive plan, with all components, and any differences from ACHE's plan will be resolved.

Senator Marsh wants to see accountability to be tied to performance-based funding for education.

Universities will develop their own strategies that share common goals and objectives with one another.

Dr. Whittaker pointed out that what was before the group now was an early draft. Our strength as a group lies in our differences and unique missions. In the meeting with Senator Marsh, guidance and not specifics were gathered. The goal is to have a good education plan for the State. The Senator has seen the first draft and was supportive.

In taking the plan to the next level, it would be best to avoid prescriptive language.

Questions posed concerning the draft thus far: Dr. Nash asked how the plan would address differentiations between “higher education,” “two-years,” and “four-years.” Also Dr. Turner asked if it would also be wise to be intentional in using the word “public.”

There was another question about the process: When we present the plan as our own means of getting to accountability, how will accountability be imposed? We need to address our institutions’ abilities to cope/ maneuver within the political outcomes.

Also, what is our means of integrating into the plan our roles, scopes, and missions?

Dr. Nash inquired into the roles of Boards of Trustees: At what point do they get involved? It is likely that the 14 university presidents will present the plan to Senator Marsh. So it is not the role of presidents but that of Boards of Trustees that must be determined. Might each Board approve/ adopt the plan? Dr. Johnson pointed out that this is new terrain without protocol. It is unclear who the authority is? ACHE? What is ACHE’s explicit role? Dr. Nash expressed that ACHE has not only the authority but the responsibility to develop a long-range plan for education. Comprehensive plans, voluntarily adopted by institutions, would ideally be provided to the new Government in January of 2019.

Senator Marsh probably sees the plan as guiding an Education budget for the State. Post Title IV there has been a lack of formal meetings of the Council of University Presidents. This could be an issue, as it is an ACHE group. Our plan would ideally go to the Council for review and input, according to Dr. Whitaker.

While November 15 is not a hard deadline, one particular challenge is that the timeline is tight to expect the presidents to provide their approval and gain Board support.

It was pointed out that Senator Marsh is glad that we are doing this and does not demand a plan by November 15. Dr. Turner found that we are last in the process only because we have not had a process before and were only presented with this challenge in March.

Dr. Johnson asked what we are to further make of the two-year plan. Do we not have a larger scope? Also, our plan is on a parallel track with Dr. Purcell’s ACHE plan with differences to be resolved.

Dr. Nash asked what ACHE’s plan’s relationship was to ours. Is it that ours is less prescriptive? State law might have to be changed to broaden the AGSC contract scope to include associates degrees as counting for block credit regardless of major.

Dr. Ingram pointed out that the plan we produce needs to be palatable to our Boards. Dr. Johnson responded that Provosts could meet with Board constituencies/ Academic Affairs subcommittees to ensure Board members are fully informed. This likely would not happen before November 15. To this Dr. Nash asked when the group thought Dr. Purcell might go before ACHE with his final plan.

Dr. Whitaker thought it wise to request that plans be prepared with delayed implementation until all three could be harmonized.

Dr. Whitaker led the group in working on the plan's details as follows, by priority:

Priority 1) Persistence to graduation needs to be mentioned.

There was a general discussion of percentage targets on the horizon, for example, among 19-25 year olds, to attain a 65% rate with some credential.

Priority 2) The plan needs to address place-bound, working students and add an objective covering that.

Dr. Turner asked where we would address the cost of college. A bullet point about reasonable costs should be added. Dr. Johnson wondered if that might constrain Boards of Trustees and institutions and suggested a bullet point about increased funding.

Priority 3) The group considered how to reduce the need for remediation. Also where does dual enrollment fit and should we add the State's Reading Initiative to our objectives?

Priority 4) This should be expanded to include research, creativity, graduate, and post-graduate education. We need to increase the numbers of graduates in strategic areas across the state.

Priority 5) Along with economic and workforce development, wording to cover strategically important graduates as determined by the local marketplace should be included.

This would entail building stronger, more collaborative relationship between state research officers (a blueprint for which is already under consideration) and defining the role of technology in helping increase capacity.

Two strategies would be to pursue EPSCoR and Sea Grant collaborations and foster collaboration between publics and privates.

Deliberation of possible strategies to establish state-wide definitions and scores by Academic Affairs offices is needed.

Dr. Nash recommended recognizing the role of addressing the needs of a global marketplace and the importance of global awareness.

Also, attracting out-of-state students to remain and fulfill state needs should be covered under this priority.

Dr. Johnson asked what the time frame should be going forward. He requested that writing “homework” assignments by individuals and teams be sent to him and Dr. Whitaker by September 1.

Dr. Nash suggested adding a vision statement that includes language reflecting roles, scopes, and missions of each individual institution.

Dr. Nash was also crafting added language to include in the Mission Statement.

The group agreed to recognize that Dr. Purcell is working constructively with us and we should send feedback about his presentation as soon as possible if we think it is helpful. Dr. Johnson will inquire when he presents next.

IV. Next Meeting: Typically we meet jointly in October with the ACCS instructional deans. There has been no word yet when that is taking place.

IV. The meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.