

Fresh Look at Nevada Community College Task Force
Thursday, May 19, 2011 at Nevada State College

Chairman James called the meeting to order at 10:20 a.m.

Item 1. Call to Order and Roll Call: Task Force members in attendance are Chairman Bruce James, Brent Chamberlain, Jill Derby, Barbara Fraser, Scott Huber, Collie Hutter, Rob Jorden, Matt LaBranch, Pedro Martinez and Patricia Miltenberger.

Others in attendance include Dr. Lesley DiMare (NSC president), Richard Rubsamen (Sierra Nevada College president), Lynn Gillette (SNC), Jennifer Hartvickson (Kaplan University, executive director), Jacqueline Woods (DeVry Inc, senior partnerships advisor).

Item 2. Approval of Minutes: March meeting minutes were approved (Scott Huber moved to approve; Pat Miltenberger seconded the motion; all in favor.)

Item 3. Overview of Nevada State College: Chairperson James introduced Dr. Lesley DiMare who gave a brief overview of her professional background and an overview of Nevada State College. She noted nursing and teaching are NSC's cornerstone programs but there are many more degrees and online offerings. Chairperson James asked her opinion on hybrid courses and Dr. DiMare highly recommended them as the best option. She noted the large growth in enrollment over the years, is due in part, as an alternative to UNLV for those who can't afford or qualify for the university. While nursing is the largest percentage of NSC's enrollment, not all are able to pass the pre-nursing program so NSC helps to redirect them to another degree or to the community college. NSC works hard to create pathways for all students. Task Force member Jill Derby recalled that when NSC was being considered, the Rand Study emphasized a great need for a third tier of education and suggested Nevada will need at least five state colleges to fill its future needs.

Item 4: Partnership Discussion: Chairperson James stated that he has chaired the boards of five colleges and chaired the NW Commission and during this time has seen massive growth of the for-profit private sector in the US. Today's goal in hearing from the private sector is to learn their strengths, and to examine whether there's anything the Task Force can learn from the discussion or any possible partnerships.

Jennifer Hartvickson, executive director of academic partnerships at Kaplan University gave an overview of her background and of the organization. She noted Kaplan is primarily online, offers 125 career-oriented programs at all degree levels except doctorate. The average age of students is 34 with 75 percent of enrollment being female. Kaplan is geared mainly toward continuing and workforce education. All programs are built with open electives (universal degree program) to allow more credits to transfer in and students can get credit for work experience to further shorten the pathway. They don't have open enrollment and students must pass an assessment to make sure they can succeed in an online environment. Kaplan has done limited work in Nevada with community colleges, offering a 10 percent tuition discount for community college transfers. They also offer articulation agreements, transfer pathways and reverse articulation. Jennifer felt this might be a good partnership option, as reverse articulation is beneficial to a student who

can't get into a community college or university class because it is full. They can take a single class at Kaplan, with reverse articulation to count toward their degree. The cost at Kaplan is \$66000 for full a bachelor's degree, approximately \$15000 per year, but scholarships and tuition reduction are available.

Jacqueline Woods, senior partnership advisor for DeVry, gave an overview of her background which includes 25 years working with community colleges. She represents DeVry Inc. which is the parent corporation of multiple schools within the DeVry system, including 90 campuses in the US and Canada. They also have campuses in Henderson, Las Vegas and Reno. She highlighted DeVry's Campus Advantage Academy which provides dual enrollment for high school juniors and seniors. They attend half a day in high school and half a day with DeVry. She suggested NSHE look at similar 2+2+2 programs as 75 percent of Academy participants have gone on to baccalaureate programs. DeVry is very open to public and private partnerships for workforce development and online learning.

Richard Rubsamen, president of Sierra Nevada College (SNC) gave an overview of the college which opened in Incline Village in 1969 and grew by 20 acres in the 1990's. It is the only private (not for profit), residential four-year institution in the state. SNC now offers classes in Reno, Henderson and Las Vegas, as well as online. The main focus is on liberal arts, professional preparedness, entrepreneurial thinking, and sustainability. Current enrollment is 1303 statewide. Enrollment at Incline Village is capped at 800 but right now is only 560. SNC is looking to expand facilities and offerings through the adult market and a pilot online master's program. While their research shows outcomes for online delivery are virtually the same as in the classroom, Rich feels hybrid classes are the preferred method. SNC has long and successful partnerships with CCSN, WCSN, UNR, DRI, UC Davis, University of California and University of Southern Nevada. This fall, SNC will begin delivering courses to Incline High School using the high school's facilities and faculty for some classes.

Chairperson James noted that Nevada is at the bottom for number of college degrees and at the top for its high school dropout rate. There is also renewed discussion in the state about economic diversification and now that the Governor has taken responsibility for economic diversification, he is hopeful things may improve. If Nevada is to provide a qualified workforce, the question now is how do we prepare the workforce and get them ready for incoming businesses? Since Nevada has the lowest educational attainment in the country, he feels the state needs to set a target for educational attainment. It is obvious that focusing on dual enrollment in high school would speed up the process while reducing costs to taxpayers and students. By moving the first two years of college into high schools, students would be better prepared to enter college or the workforce upon high school graduation.

Task Force member Scott Huber noted that the TMCC faculty fully embraces and supports technology and online offerings, especially the hybrid model.

Break was taken at 11:55 for a tour, followed by lunch.

Andy Kuniyuki, dean of the School of Liberal Arts & Sciences led the group on a tour of the Liberal Arts & Science building, including the classrooms, labs and “ticker” room.

Meeting resumed at 12:25 p.m.

Chairperson James asked Jacqueline for more information on the Advantage Academy. She said the model works differently depending on the locale, but there is no cost to students and the gap in funding is paid for by private businesses. She suggested Nevada require more of businesses; bring them to the table and give them reasons to buy into it.

Chairperson James asked if it would be acceptable to ask taxpayers to be responsible for dual enrollment education. Task Force member Pedro Martinez felt it was fine. Jacqueline Woods agreed and noted the taxpayers are already responsible for mandatory K-12 education, so it would be no different, as long as it is mandatory. Discussion then centered on the need for teachers to be retrained for changes such as technology and dual enrollment. Task Force member Pedro Martinez felt it would be best to retrain teachers through both private and public higher education as the infrastructure is already in place. Higher education needs to let K-12 know what the needs are. Both higher education and K-12 teachers need to learn to learn how to use data assessment, use of new technology and how to teach in a dual enrollment environment. Chairperson James felt this could get approval as it is a one-time project to bring teachers up to speed and funding could be found for it. Pedro added this could also be used to train teachers on how common course standards are college based. It would be great for professional development, and learning how to use data for monitoring progress of students. Pedro also state that better alignment is needed by K-12 as to what is needed by higher education and employers. Task Force member Brent Chamberlin added that the other crucial factor is mentoring and educating families, as many parents are scared of college and pass that on to kids, or are unaware of college opportunities.

Discussion then centered on how schools serve different sectors and regions uniquely. Jacqueline Woods said she feels the key lies in alignment with communities.

Chairperson James asked the group what the obstacles are in public education that prevents private/public partnerships. President Rubsamen said he thinks the problem lies in the nature of large organizations and the fact that it is hard to allocate resources to work on it. Also, the realization is needed that private institutions are not really competitors as they fill different needs. Chairperson James noted Nevada has been disadvantaged by trying to educate all kids and adults with public money. Jacqueline Woods added that private institutions can have more funding flexibility than public institutions, as they can customize their offerings to those that bring in the most money. They also have more flexibility of delivery, curriculum and course offerings as well as outreach efforts. President Rubsamen added that privates can move more quickly for change as the need arises, while that is much harder to do in a public institution.

Chairperson James asked for input on career education. He noticed many college programs NSHE provides don't end up providing marketable skills for a job upon graduation. Task Force member Jill Derby pointed out that there are high school career academies and the community colleges do provide a lot of workforce education. Chairperson James wondered if all high school

students were in dual enrollment if it would free up more resources for career education. Pedro Martinez reminded him that all children are different so they need many different pathways. There is a great need to expand adult education to ensure adult learners have a career path and graduate ready to go to college or graduate with a certificate in something such as nursing, so they can go into the workforce. Pedro said that instead of working in a vacuum, K-12 and higher education needs to think of itself as K-20. Task Force member Brent Chamberlain feels an adult returning to school is often tied to employment. He felt adults have the ability to pay more so perhaps it would be good to segregate the two groups and charge differently.

Chairperson James noted the rapid speed of changing technology necessitates the need for the state to be able to retrain people in new careers at a faster pace. He thinks the private organizations can provide that best, while the adult stays in the job market. It was generally agreed that the students should be considered as two segments: adults and high school graduates and the focus should be on how to serve the two most efficiently and economically.

Chairperson James agreed that with the state's limited public resources, the goal is to determine how best to invest the resources. He noted flexibility in delivery is extremely important in workforce development and wondered if it would be possible to make an offer to the business community to have them help to pay. Matt LaBranch noted the necessity of partnerships between public and private industry is apparent, as all businesses will eventually need to retool their workforce. Private offerings need to be leveraged with public.

Chairperson James asked if it would be beneficial to focus the state's resources in specific areas and let private organizations take over the rest, since they know the market. Jennifer Hartvickson agreed that high school grads and adults need to be treated as different segments. She suggested setting up channels and options for each segment. She noted Kaplan's strength is in technology. Not only are more options needed for students, they need know and understand what their options are.

President Rubsamen suggested the state still pay per student but let them decide what path to take with their portion of the money, as that would drive demand and competition across all levels. It was generally agreed that competition is healthy and the question for the public sector is whether to fight private competition or use it.

Chairperson James suggested the private institutions should have a state association. President Rubsamen said he would be willing to get with other private institutions to have a dialogue and bring their thoughts back to the Chair for feedback.

Task Force member Collie Hutter noted our enrollment capacity is lower than the need, so it will be hard to raise baccalaureate levels if we don't have the room. Perhaps bringing in private institutions can help with capacity.

Jacqueline Woods noted that around the country, many aspects of colleges are being privatized, such as facilities, payroll, janitorial, etc. Task Force member Brent Chamberlin agreed and felt that private business can often provide services cheaper and more efficiently than public.

There was conversation about colleges needing to hear more about what K-12 needs and the importance of K-12 knowing what higher education needs. Task Force member Pedro Martinez gave the example that it would be good for higher education to know what challenges exist in K-12 so that teacher prep programs can better prepare.

Item 5. Faculty Salary Schedule: Scott Huber handed out the community college salary schedule and stated the perception is that the schedule is too rigid. For example, at TMCC, step 10 is the highest you can come in at entry level, then after 10 years you would go up to step 20. The thinking is that having ranges as opposed to steps would allow a new employee to start at a higher level which would be better for recruitment. However, he asked the opinion of several campus presidents who indicated they are fine with the salary schedule as is. In addition, it is hard to quantify at the community college level as to which teachers are better than others and it is problematic to say if one teacher is better than another. The question is if the current process is too rigid and how merit should be handled at the community college level. He added that current placement within each step varies with each institution Task Force member Jill Derby asked if this issue is within the Task Force's realm of focus. It was generally agreed among the group that there are bigger issues for the Task Force to tackle. Chairperson James agreed to pass on discussion of this issue.

Item 6: Lines of Business for Community Colleges: Collie Hutter state a good way to think of this discussion is “lines of business = lines of education.” The definition of lines of business is “a set of one or more products which service a particular customer transaction or business need,” or looking at the end product of what a community needs. She said different communities demand different products, such as educated citizens, a skilled workforce, community building and culture. She surveyed the community colleges as to their current primary lines of business; their goal of what to have as their lines of business; lines of business that utilize the most resources and lines of business that the institution feels they should not be in. Three of four institutions responded (GBC, WNC and TMCC).

For all responding institutions, the primary community demand they feel they are responding to is preparing citizens for entering or re-entering the workforce. Task Force member Matt LaBranch wondered how K-12 would answer the same question. Task Force member Pedro Martinez said until recently there has not been a clear vision and it would be a good idea to bring the key players of K-12 together with community college leaders to have this same conversation on lines of business. Task Force member Jill Derby noted that one of the recommendations of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force was for radical restructuring of governance with the governor being in charge and reporting to the state superintendent. This would achieve a single point of accountability. Chairperson James asked her to forward that recommendation to him.

Collie continued saying that all three responding institutions have as a goal to have and/or increase the number of co-enrolled high school students and first generation college students. The most common lines of business that the three colleges felt they shouldn't be in are remedial education and continuing or "just for fun" classes. They said remedial classes use valuable resources and it is a money-losing area. The institutions wouldn't mind it as long as they were able to charge full price. Chairperson James agreed there is a public responsibility for basic education and we shouldn't be putting resources into these areas. Task Force member Scott

Huber suggested this could be fertile ground for partnerships between community colleges and communities. If the community wants these things they should pay for them. Task Force member Scott Huber pointed out that these "for fun" classes or cultural offerings often cement the college in the community. Task Force member Brent Chamberlain agreed and reminded the group that the community is an institution's most important partner. Task Force member Barbara Fraser agreed but felt we can't afford to be "everything to everybody" so we should be in the business of education and let someone else take over the rest. Collie reiterated that the community colleges aren't saying they want to get out of these areas, they just want to be able to charge full price for and take them out of the subsidized classes. Task Force member Brent Chamberlain reminded that an institution must meet needs of the community or it won't support the college.

Collie noted that TMCC reported 24 percent of its students are in remedial classes and 11 percent of sections are used for remedial classes.

Item 7. Discussion of Task Force Findings and Report: Chairperson James suggested moving all community colleges into the high schools and converting the existing community colleges into state college. Task Force member Jill Derby pointed out that while the Rand Study did suggest more state colleges, it also noted the importance and need for community colleges. There was a conversation about the concern that moving it to high schools would result in the "dumbing down" of an associate's degree. Chairperson James felt it could be possible to achieve with a whole new mindset and curriculum, and by bringing technology into the picture. Task Force member Rob Jorden pointed out that taking away community colleges would remove that pathway for returning adults.

Chairperson James agreed and wondered if community colleges could be focused solely on workforce education. Task Force member Scott Huber wondered what percentage of high school students are actually ready to tackle college level work. He felt that perhaps the focus should be on tapping into the group of students that is capable and not trying to make it mandatory for all. There was discussion that dual enrollment could be ramped up for a select group of high school students but not necessarily all and the fact that community colleges are still necessary, especially for rural areas such as GBC whose students can't afford to go to UNR or need to be able to go to GBC while working in Elko. It was also discussed that while online and hybrid classes are extremely valuable, there will always be a need for the physical campus and classroom for many areas. Collie noted that you can learn heavy electrical work online.

Task Force member Pat Miltenberger suggested thinking of each community college as a regional center, able to offer bachelor's degrees if needed. Chairperson James wondered if all community college teachers are capable of teaching at the baccalaureate level. It was generally agreed that enough would be capable of doing so. Chairperson James noted that this all fits into the need to find more pathways. Task Force member Jill Derby agreed and noted that the workforce also needs well educated, critical thinkers.

Item 8. Public comment: none.

Item 9. Adjournment: Chairperson James set the next meeting for June 16. It was pointed out that the Board of Regents' meeting is that day. He still felt it was important to meet on the 16th. Task

Force member Scott Huber offered to make facilities available at TMCC, since the office in Reno would probably be booked.

The date for the next meeting was set at June 16 at TMCC.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.