

MINUTES

SPECIAL COMMISSION ON 21ST CENTURY COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Wednesday, December 15, 1999
10:00 a.m.
Palo Alto College
San Antonio, Texas

Pursuant to a notice posted in accordance with Senate Rules, a public hearing of the Special Commission on 21st Century Colleges and Universities was held on Wednesday, December 15, 1999 at Palo Alto College at San Antonio, Texas.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chairman Jim Adams
Senator Teel Bivins
Pastor Kirbyjon Caldwell
Commissioner Tony Garza
Dr. Betsy Jones
Margie Kintz
Nancy Marcus
Senator Bill Ratliff
Karen Shewbart
Senator Carlos Truan
Danny Vickers
Pam Willeford (ex-officio)

MEMBERS ABSENT

Steve Letbetter
Jeff Sandefer
Senator Royce West

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. There being a quorum present, the following business was transacted.

The Chair advised that the first order of business was to approve the minutes of the October 27, 1999 meeting. Senator Bivins moved to approve the minutes.

Without objection, the minutes were approved.

Chairman Adams and John Opperman conducted a brief explanation and discussion of the issues document which was prepared based on discussions at the October 27, 1999 meeting. Mr. Opperman also briefly discussed the proposed timeline for Commission meetings and topics to be covered at those meetings.

The Chair then introduced Dr. Steve Murdock of Texas A&M University. Dr. Murdock gave a slide presentation relating to demographic changes impacting Texas.

Chairman Adams introduced Senator Teel Bivins who presented a report from the Senate Education Committee on K-16 initiatives.

Chairman Adams introduced the K-16 Issues Panel:

Dr. William E. Reaves, representing Texas A&M System and the Texas Education Agency, spoke on the need to increase teacher preparedness, enhance regional partnerships, align admissions standards so that what is required to graduate from high school is the same as what is required to go on to college, and increase financial aid.

Dr. Bud Frankenberger, representing UT - Pan American, spoke on the need to raise expectations for all students regardless of income level and race. He noted that students receive letters in sports and other extracurricular activities, but not for academics. Students need motivation and better preparation for college and the workforce.

Dr. Jack Jordan of Harlandale Independent School District spoke of the need for high school counselors to work with students to ensure they are aware of financial aid opportunities that are available to them, and advocated starting with the parents at the time children are born. He also spoke of a program within Harlandale ISD in which 200 students who hadn't planned to go to college did after encouragement from the district.

Dr. Don Brown, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board spoke on the need for higher expectations. He cited that students who take harder courses in high school are more likely to complete their degree.

Chairman Adams introduced the Financial Aid and Admissions panel:

Ms. Sharon Cobb, Assistant Commissioner for Student Services for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, gave a presentation utilizing a number of charts and graphs to demonstrate how income levels relate to financial aid eligibility and need. Those with lower incomes tend to participate less and have a lower graduation rate.

Ms. Lynn Rodriguez, General Counsel and Director of Access and Equity for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board spoke on legal issues in admissions, including minority enrollment issues, the top 10% rule, and the effect and current status of Hopwood.

Dr. Marc Nigliazzo, Ph.D., President of the Texas Association of Community Colleges, and CEO and President of Temple College, spoke on demographics of community college students and the reasons students choose to attend community colleges. Half of community college students receive some financial aid.

Dr. John Edwards, Ph.D., Past President of the Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers and Dean of Enrollment Management at Texas A&M Commerce, spoke on making the admissions process and education more accessible, and on the challenges of providing quality education under legislative constraints. Dr. Edwards advocated business partnerships and other programs to promote participation in higher education, and stressed the need for better incentives for teachers to improve student preparedness.

Chairman Adams then introduced Jack Falks, President of the Texas Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, Director of the Student and Administration Services at Texas A&M Health Science Center, and Past Assistant Director of Financial Aid for Texas A&M University. Mr. Falks spoke on state and federal sources of financial aid and gave a synopsis of state aid provided by other states as compared to Texas which showed the Texas lags other states and relies very heavily on student loans.

Chairman Adams opened the floor for public testimony.

Mr. Henry R. Munoz, III, President of Kell Munoz Wiggins, and representative of the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, spoke on the need for greater attention to the border region and cultural influences that impact access to education.

Dr. Richard Diem, Executive Director of the University of Texas at San Antonio Alliance for Education, spoke on K-16 initiatives at UTSA and in the San Antonio area.

Judge Cyndi Taylor Krier, Bexar County Judge, spoke about the significant concentration of higher education institutions in San Antonio. She discussed their San Antonio's efforts to bring a Texas A&M @ Kingsville campus to San Antonio and advocated the establishment of a joint UT-A&M campus in San Antonio similar to a model in Indiana.

Mr. Albert Kauffman, Regional Counsel for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, presented a report on the lack of higher education institutions and funding for the border region.

Professor Manuel Berriozabal, Professor of Mathematics at the University of Texas at San Antonio and Coordinator for the Texas Prefreshman Engineering Program, presented a report on the Texas Prefreshman Engineering Program.

Dr. Rosalie Ambrosino, Associate Vice-President for Undergraduate Studies at the University of Texas at San Antonio, spoke on retention and recruitment initiatives at UTSA and in the San Antonio area. She emphasized the need for academic advisors and support programs to assist students throughout their college years.

Chairman Adams asked the Commission members to provide feedback on the meeting format and on what areas they would like to receive more information.

There being no further business, at 3:55 p.m. Chairman Adams moved that the Commission stand adjourned. Without objection, it was so ordered.