Academic Staff Representative Report
Submitted by Katie Wilson
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The Academic Staff Representatives met on Friday, September 20, 2013 in Madison. Below is a summary of what was discussed.

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Academic Staff Leadership Conference Summary

This past summer’s leadership conference, hosted in Madison, went well. There were 120 conference attendees. UW-Superior has tentatively offered to host it for next summer.

Budgets

Academic Staff Reps discussed how budget cuts were being instituted on their various campuses. There was some discussion of a spreadsheet circulating among administrators that gives details about how much money from tuition dollars ends up coming back to each campus from UW-System. Reps were unclear as to how UW-System determines how much money each campus receives back.

Shared Governance

Reps discussed the issue of shared governance, which was raised earlier this month at the “Finding Common Ground” session. At this session, a legislator raised the concern that shared governance at UW-Madison and the UW comprehensives is causing inefficiencies and making it difficult for chancellors to act as executive chiefs of their institutions. Reps shared different strategies on their campuses as far as responding to the latter concern. UW-Milwaukee’s shared governance body issued a statement on shared governance. Other Reps were interested in a statement such as this. UW-La Crosse’s Rep shared a summary from the Republican working group that looked at the issue of shared governance during the summer of 2013. The summary gave very little information about the working group’s findings but rather was a conglomeration of articles on the issue. The summary can be found at https://docs.google.com/file/d/0Bxrg_FyIL7f1XzRDUDV2aG1WNnM/edit?pli=1

Reps discussed the importance of the search for the new UW System president as that position pertains to shared governance. Reps also discussed the importance of academic staff being active participants in shared governance on each campus and strategies for reaching out to these constituents.

Reps discussed University Personnel Guidelines 3.05 for clarification on how academic staff contracts are issued, how much notice is necessary in the case of nonrenewal, etc.

Reps discussed performance evaluations and their importance and inconsistencies in how they are carried out. UW-La Crosse’s Rep shared that their campus has a Performance Management Team that is responsible for these issues. The new University Personnel Structure has some additional guidelines as far as performance management and how it needs to be carried out.
Academic Staff Representatives joined the Faculty Representatives and UW System administrators.

Shared Governance

Administrators and Reps discussed the issue of shared governance relating to the Finding Common Ground session. Other issues that were raised at that session were on teaching load and homogeneity of the curriculum. The Republican working group that looked at the issue in the summer of 2013 also considered the issues of Board of Regent structure and membership, and job readiness of students.

Mark Nook shared that he is pulling together a list of situations that have been positively impacted by shared governance. Administrators will be reaching out to legislators on the issue of shared governance. Chancellors Blank and Cross will be meeting with Representative Vos along with faculty in an effort to better understand the situation and concerns with shared governance.

A Faculty Rep shared that Information has been requested from legislators on faculty and their workload.

Mark Nook shared that the Education Committee will be setting their agenda/priorities for this coming year soon. They will possibly be looking at 3 issues: faculty/instructional academic staff workload, quality of education, and compensation.

Surplus/Balances

Kevin Reilly shared information on the issue of the surplus. Going forward, there will likely be a policy created to address the issue of how to manage balances.

UW System President Search

Administrators shared the timeline for the search for the UW System’s next president, which is as follows:

November 15 – deadline for applications
Mid-December: 10-15 semifinalists selected
End of December: Recommend 5 finalists
Early January: Finalist interviews with 6 Regents, selection committee, and UW System administrators

There will be a website on the presidential search process with information and updates.

Budget Update

David Miller gave an update on how the state of Wisconsin budget affects the UW System. There is $62 million per year in ongoing liability/deficit. Miller shared information on the current budget breakdown for the UW System.
A working group of chancellors (led by Sorenson) will decide what kinds of funds will be held centrally by System. There will possibly be a policy for each campus to carry a 10% balance/reserve and that if those balances/reserves do not meet that level, campuses will need to explain to the Board of Regents their plan to increase them. If balances/reserves are greater than 15%, campuses will need to explain to the Board of Regents the reasoning.

UW System administration communicates with campus CBOs regularly on budget issues.

Miller explained that there are Systemwide funds that are returned to campuses for things like veteran tuition remission, tuition imbalances, and other things such as unforeseen crises.

Board of Regents

Mark Nook shared that he will be giving an Accountability Report to the Board of Regents at their upcoming meeting. The UW System schools are doing well in all measures but 4-year graduation rates as compared to peer institutions. This will need to be addressed.

Nook also shared that he will be giving a report on remedial education and will be calling for a task force on the issue of how best deliver remedial education on our campuses.