

NEVADA STUDENT ALLIANCE (NSA)

Minutes

June 6, 2014

7:15-7:45 a.m.

Truckee Meadows Community College

7000 Dandini Boulevard

Reno, NV 89512

Sierra Building, Room 201

Meeting called to order at 7:15 AM by NSA Chair Stephanie Prevost.

Members Present: Mr. Alex Bybee, University of Nevada, Reno, ASUN (for Jake Pereira)
Mr. David Cortez-Lopez, Nevada State College, NSSA
Mr. Angelo DePerez, Western Nevada College, ASWN
Mr. William McCurdy, College of Southern Nevada, ASCSN
Mrs. Stephanie Prevost, Truckee Meadows Community College, SGA
Ms. DeMarynee Saili, Great Basin College, SGA
Ms. Sharon Young, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, GPSA

Members Absent: Mr. Elias Benjelloun, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, CSUN
Ms. RJ Boyajian, University of Nevada, Reno, GSA
Ms. K.C. King, Desert Research Institute, GRAD
Mr. Jake Pereira, University of Nevada, Reno, ASUN

Others present: Board of Regents Vice Chair Rick Trachok
Chancellor Dan Klaich
Yesenia Cuevas, NSC
Renee Davis, NSHE
Pedro Duenas, WNC
Isaac Duran, GBC
Deborah Echoles, TMCC
Alex Porter, GBC
Bryce Powell, GBC
Bryanna Snoddy, TMCC
Scott Young, NSHE

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

INFORMATION

No public comment was presented.

2. DISCUSSION WITH BOARD CHAIR

INFORMATION

Students met with Vice Chair Rick Trachok and Chancellor Dan Klaich to discuss aspirations and concerns for each institution and the higher education system.

The first question dealt with the tuition and fee proposal on the Board agenda for later that day and how the student body presidents should best provide their input. Regent Trachok suggested that it would be

best to bring up during public comment, and he reminded everyone of the two-minute per person time limit for public comment.

The next question was from NSC Student Body President David Cortez-Lopez about how the Chancellor viewed NSC's future. The Chancellor responded that NSC is facing a monstrous challenge, pointing out that NSC leadership have created an environment that is attracting lots of students. The Chancellor believes it will be challenging to maintain the NSC spirit as the institution grows.

NSA Vice Chair Sharon Young asked if a date had been set for Nevada Education Day during the 2015 legislative session. The Chancellor was not aware of a date, but Alex Porter reported that Sebring Frehner, who is no longer an NSHE student but is politically active, may have already set up a date independent of NSHE or NSA. Chair Prevost said she would talk with Vice Chancellor Constance Brooks about where things stand. The Chancellor recommended this be done soon as the legislative calendar fills up quickly.

Vice Chair Young also asked about the UNLV presidential search. Regent Trachok explained the Board did not want the process to hijack the search, but the target to get a president hired is as soon as possible. He explained it was difficult to say how long the search would take, but the search committee has already met with the consultant and agreed upon important attributes the new UNLV president should have. The consultant's work will continue through summer, and it is hoped that two to five individuals will be brought forward to the committee for consideration. Chancellor Klaich says that he and the Board are confident in the job Interim President Snyder is doing. This gives NSHE the luxury to find the right person for the UNLV presidency.

Alex Bybee asked about main arguments in opposition of the tuition increases. Chancellor Klaich said it is not difficult to understand. Throughout the recession fees increases have been supported by students. Concern has been expressed that it is time for the State of Nevada to step up. All Nevadans have shared the burden of the recession. The question is how do we get to where we want to be? How can we improve and fly under the banner of where we are is good enough? For example, the universities have Tier 1 aspirations, and CSN—historically underfunded—needs funds to rebuild student services.

ASCSN President William McCurdy would like to see the funds come from a different place – the state. He explained CSN students are concerned regarding the growing disparity between universities and community college. Many students are concerned about being able to transfer and it still being affordable to do so. CSN is in dire need of support by the state and the universities. It is no longer possible to work and pay your way through school. It is important to lobby the legislature to help make sure the American dream is still attainable. Regent Trachok asked if the student body presidents were satisfied with the state of their college or university today. He stated that a living organism either grows or dies, and if you think there are things that need improvement, where are we going to get the money to pay for improvement? If the state does not put the money in, and the students do not put the money in, we are left treading water. The state has significant demands upon the budget and the climate in the Nevada legislature is not receptive to considering new forms of revenue. We need to get serious about education. To assume the state will push higher ed to the top is unrealistic. Chancellor Klaich says he does not disagree with much of anything William said, but if you look at agenda, it has been constructed in such a way to try to be responsive to student concerns. Institutions are being brought forth to present their visions. The next step is to consider what we are going to ask the state to do. Are we going to ask the state for reinvestment? Only after that, after there is a vision by institutions and the request for the state to belly up, that is when we come to the students.

Chancellor Klaich admitted he tosses and turns at night worrying about who will be left behind. The working poor is a gigantic issue. It is time for the state of Nevada to understand their obligations to this very much at risk population in Nevada. Vice Chair Young believes that it makes a stronger statement to the legislature to say we care and we are contributing—that we need the state to be a partner. Alex Porter thinks the most legitimate argument against tuition and fee increase is lack of access for students. Do all institutions have a commitment to maintain access? The group agreed yes. Is it enough? Chancellor and Vice Chair responded with a definite no. NSHE lost over 270 million from operating budgets since 2008.

As a system, we are trying to do the best we can to bring money back. We need to increase other revenue sources, such as those from grants and research. But we cannot do this if we stay where we are. The Chancellor recognized that while we are asking the state for need-based aid, it is not enough to help everyone. He and the Board are trying to get the legislature to recognize the point and build from there. Every single family in the state should have the same opportunity we have had. Alex Bybee agreed that there is an obligation by the community to help everyone succeed. We live in an individualist society where it is normal to take care of yourself first. Once you can do that, you need to take care of others. It is about building community. Chancellor Klaich remarked that he sat at a similar table 40 years ago as a student leader. It was an important time in his life and he recognizes the student body presidents' service and commitment.

President McCurdy pointed out that if we can get the state convinced they need to reinvest in higher education, it will not only benefit us, it will benefit the world. The Chancellor said this will happen, but the student body presidents and other students who will do it. Nevada legislators need to hear how education is changing students' lives. President Prevost remarked that her personal reason for supporting the increase is that she wants to live in an educated populace.

3. NEW BUSINESS

INFORMATION

No New Business was presented

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

INFORMATION

No public comment was presented.

Meeting adjourned at 7:54 a.m. by Chair Prevost.