

SPECIAL MEETING

BOARD OF REGENTS
NEVADA SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION
Conference Room, System Administration
5550 W. Flamingo Road, Suite C-1, Las Vegas
Monday, April 24, 2006

Members Present: Mrs. Dorothy S. Gallagher, Vice Chairman
Mrs. Thalia M. Dondero
Mrs. Linda C. Howard
Mr. James Dean Leavitt
Mr. Howard Rosenberg
Dr. Jack Lund Schofield
Mr. Steve Sisolak

Members Absent: Mr. Mark Alden
Dr. Stavros Anthony
Dr. Jill Derby
Mr. Douglas Roman Hill
Mr. Bret Whipple
Mr. Michael B. Wixom

Others Present: Mr. Daniel Klaich, Executive Vice Chancellor
Mrs. Mary Ellen McMullen, UNR Foundation
Dr. Marlene I. Strathe

Vice Chairman Dorothy S. Gallagher called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. with all members present except Regents Alden, Anthony, Derby, Hill, Leavitt, Sisolak, Whipple, and Wixom.

Vice Chairman Gallagher observed that no action would be taken since a quorum was not present.

1. Information Only-Candidate Visit with Board of Regents - Dr. Marlene I. Strathe, a finalist for the position of President of the University of Nevada, Reno, met with members of the Board of Regents.

Dr. Marlene I. Strathe was very appreciative for the opportunity to meet with the Board again, and honored to be back and meet with even more people, particularly those on campus.

Vice Chairman Gallagher asked Dr. Strathe if she would like to share any information. Dr. Strathe stated she was born and raised in Iowa. She went to a small, independent school and graduated from a class of eleven students. Her experience with Iowa State University was a life changing experience. She met wonderful faculty mentors and got involved in an assortment of co-curricular activities.

1. Information Only-Candidate Visit with Board of Regents – (Cont'd.)

Dr. Strathe decided she wanted to start her career in student affairs. While working in the Dean of Students office, it was suggested that to be successful in student affairs, that she go to the faculty. She started teaching and fell in love with the classroom. At a later point in time she was offered a chance to go back into student affairs as a vice president, but declined in order to stay on the academic side. She had a wonderful chance at Northern Iowa to be both a faculty member, and also assume a number of administrative posts. Dr. Strathe left Iowa after her son went to college. She went on to the University of North Dakota as provost, from there to

Northern Colorado, and then to Oklahoma State.

Regent Rosenberg said UNR was the land grant university. He has always bridled at being called the “flagship” because to him, that meant the best. He felt that UNLV was a fine university and did not feel that UNR was better, just different. He asked Dr. Strathe about her interest in land grant and in flagship. Dr. Strathe replied that flagship institutions have usually been the ones most often marked by a strong liberal arts core with a number of the professional schools. As UNR was the first university in the state, it sits as the flagship institution. She does not equate flagship with elitist, but more in terms of professional preparation, certainly UNR carries that, and the land grant mission.

Dr. Strathe said that was a mission she defined in terms of access, which was the original intent, and the Morrill Act was to provide an education that was accessible to the people. She has always termed the land grant institution as the “peoples’ university”. She said UNR carried both of those as a dual mission for professional preparation and strong core curriculum, and a mission for access to reach out to a larger part of the state beyond the student population. She felt it was an exciting opportunity and not many institutions have both of these responsibilities.

Regent Rosenberg said now that there were three tiers in the state, there was a movement to raise the grade point average so that access to the university would be different from before. He asked if she had any experience with this and how it worked. Dr. Strathe said there have been tiered admissions at every institution she has worked, and Oklahoma State was now in the process of raising admission standards over three years to raise the WC ACT and rank in class, and it was now beginning its second year of raising those admission standards. In doing so, it was recognized that the land grant institution had a commitment to access, which would need to be balanced against raising the admission standards.

Dr. Strathe continued that partnership was developed with Northern Oklahoma College, called the Gateway program, located in a remodeled strip mall on campus. It began by teaching remedial classes; not state supported. Two hundred and fifty students enrolled the first semester. Subsequently, it was expanded to general education offerings. Any student that was not admissible to Oklahoma State could have admission into the Gateway program, and use the same school services, except they could not belong to a fraternity or sorority, which had something to do with their charters. The courses were taken at NOC and then they could seamlessly transfer within 24 hours with a 2.5 GPA.

1. Information Only-Candidate Visit with Board of Regents – *(Cont’d.)*

There were well over 1,000 students this past fall. They carried no stigmas being NOC students, most others were not aware.

Dr. Strathe said because of its popularity, more room was needed and a jointly funded OSU and NOC all-classroom building, was under construction. The faculty have been meeting to identify use of similar text books, anticipated outcomes, and curricula. This program has been very helpful for students not ready for full admission. Smaller classes provide technology based support, particularly in mathematics where many students struggle. As more students transfer, the success rate will be easier to identify. She added that while the program was still young, the success rate was high.

Dr. Strathe added that there was another program created with Tulsa Community College, which was the largest feeder located in Tulsa, and there was an upper division at the graduate program campus in Tulsa. They are working on a dual-admission program, where the student would be admitted simultaneously to Tulsa Community College and Oklahoma State. The lower division work would be taken at TCC and the upper division at the Tulsa campus. The students would be taught by the same faculty and hopes are the transitions will be seamless.

Regent Leavitt entered the meeting.

Mr. Klaich asked what drove admission requirements at Oklahoma State. Dr. Strathe responded it was a dual

action, which included a budget downturn occurring at a time when enrollment was growing by 2% to 4%, but the university was down 100 faculty. There had to be a better way to control growth. They had the ability to do what was called “8%”, where the university could take up to 8% of their students that were not fully admissible. They found the 8% were not successful and it was time to move away from the remedial business and to balance increased standards with access. At the state Regents level, the desire to raise admission standards was a great concern to the rural Regents.

Regent Dondero asked if the access system hurt the community college programs by having the interim NOC group. Dr. Strathe said that Northern Oklahoma College has two main campuses; this was just the establishment of a third location. Regent Dondero clarified that it was administered by the community college. Dr. Strathe said that was correct. Regent Rosenberg noted that Northern Oklahoma was a community college. Dr. Strathe agreed that it is.

Dr. Strathe explained the tuition for Oklahoma State students was higher than NOC, but that was part of their memorandum of agreement. The money was paid to NOC, and NOC returned some dollars to Oklahoma State, particularly in terms of fees, for technology, library, etc. However, the students were NOC’s, they received the revenues, they transfer the credits, and then the students transfer to Oklahoma State, just as if they were on their main community college campus.

1. Information Only-Candidate Visit with Board of Regents – (Cont’d.)

Regent Sisolak entered the meeting.

Regent Schofield asked Dr. Strathe about her short-range and long-range vision conceptually, and how she would get that information out to the world. Dr. Strathe said her vision for the institution was to be a nationally recognized combination of that flagship and land grant institution. It was her belief that it was an institution already doing many things very well. She said she was not sure that outside of a regional level the institution had told its story as widely as it might. Dr. Strathe continued there were excellent scholars and excellent research, which should be capable of expansion. She advocated institutions identifying their own benchmarks for quality, and worried less about being compared to other institutions, because UNR was different. She felt the important thing was recognizing UNR’s mission, how well it would be done, and those it would serve. Dr. Strathe said that, looking ahead, she hoped prospective students would see an institution that had high quality academic programs, an outstanding group of faculty who were significantly engaged, not only in traditional research, but scholarly activities in all disciplines. She continued that it should be an institution attractive for its size, its commitment to student success, raising the quality of life for its communities, and the economical impact for the state, which was an important element of what land grant institutions needed to do. She concluded that it was not a question of being better, but to acknowledge the difference and make that the center piece of what was to be done.

Regent Schofield expressed his passion for athletics. He felt academics and athletics were on even ground and believed there were students attracted to colleges for athletics. He asked Dr. Strathe about her feeling and vision regarding athletics. Dr. Strathe said she was an avid supporter of collegiate athletics, but more important to her was that athletics gave some students an opportunity for an education they otherwise could not afford. She observed that very few students would go on to professional athletic careers, but that a university degree would give them a lifetime opportunity.

Regent Dondero asked how much research Dr. Strathe had been involved in. Dr. Strathe said that externally funded research this past year registered about \$112 million, primarily in agriculture. Some of the external money was earmarked money out of federal as basically almost a pass through. She said Oklahoma State would not substantially grow external funds for research until those 100 faculty positions were restored. She stated areas with positions being filled included engineering, the sciences, and veterinary medicine. One area that had to be addressed was their center for health sciences and preparing doctors for osteopathic medicine. Most of the external money was dedicated to rural medicine, not research. The college of veterinary medicine was in the lower quartile in size and next to last of the 27 schools in the country in terms of funding. In terms of research

productivity, they were in the top quartile due to a significant effort. Dr. Strathe continued research professorships and clinical professorships have been put into place on the campus with the intent to stimulate more external funding and to recognize, in the clinical setting, the value of people with practitioner experience. While attempting improvement in various areas, there was a need to better differentiate the skill sets.

1. Information Only-Candidate Visit with Board of Regents – (Cont'd.)

Regent Leavitt felt Dr. Strathe appeared proud of the administrative faculty relationships she had cultivated and asked why it meant so much to her and how she achieved it. Dr. Strathe said that several institutions, including the current one, have had some strained relationships. Some concerned very old incidents that seemed would never be forgotten. There was a vote of no confidence on one of the presidents, and when those things happen, it becomes difficult. She has spent a lot of time on campuses in those situations. Communication was critical, along with openness, honesty and consistency. She pointed out that people would not trust you overnight. She explained her philosophy was communication and honesty, which she expected in return; and if a consensus could not be reached, to accept it and move on. She also felt it was important to involve faculty and staff in discussions about the future, to get feedback regarding priorities, and to recognize there were times when decisions need to be made very quickly. It involved a long process of listening, consistency, and acting upon stated promises.

Vice Chairman Gallagher expressed interest in Dr. Strathe's comments about the two universities. She maintained the strength of the System is in the differences of the institutions and those strengths and differences should be highlighted. Dr. Strathe agreed, adding it was the strength of higher education in America. Dr. Strathe felt the opportunities students have to reach a plethora of schooling were the foundation of American higher education. It would be a huge mistake to meld everything into the same object at multiple locations. However, higher education could be more seamless than it has been in the past.

Regent Howard asked how Dr. Strathe felt about the preparation of high school students into the university system and what her thoughts were about admission standards. Dr. Strathe stated she does not believe K-12 and higher education have communicated well. She felt there was a need to articulate better and clearer about expectations for incoming students. She also sees a necessity for helping at the high school level so parents and students understand where the educational experiences were that could benefit students in achieving their ultimate goals. There should not be one single standard that says, "This is the preparation that gets you into post-secondary education." A better job should be done assessing students' backgrounds and recommending the educational environment for the best fit for individual students.

Dr. Strathe said she favored admission standards and the tiered standards, which more realistically convey to students where they need to be in order to be successful. It would be an injustice to admit students with low ACT scores, which would indicate a high probability of failure. The question is where the student can be placed in order to succeed. There should be more focus on the student and less on the school. Vice Chairman Gallagher added it was not fair to students or parents when they were destined for failure.

Regent Howard asked Dr. Strathe how successful she was in creating need-based scholarships. Dr. Strathe said she did not create them. Oklahoma has an assistance program created through the legislature. Anyone was eligible with an income of less than

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\$50,000. Interest must be identified in the sophomore or junior year, with the intent of encouraging students early in their high school careers. The legislature was considering raising the family income to less than \$75,000. Dr. Strathe does not believe it would be affordable. There were a number of first generation and rural area students applying. Dr. Strathe said Oklahoma State has undertaken a \$50 million foundation campaign to establish scholarships because, as tuition increased, so have tuition waivers. Millions in revenue dollars were waived. Southwestern Bell donated a large amount of money specifically targeted for transfer students who completed their associates' degree. The support is intended for juniors and seniors, being viewed as a more successful chance for student success and completion.

Regent Leavitt asked Dr. Strathe about her experience with TABOR-like initiatives. Dr. Strathe said the experience came out of Colorado, where 25% of the academic budget was lost in 18 months. The initial appearance of TABOR was very appealing on the surface. When it came up this year at Oklahoma, she spoke to a group about her experience and was directed to the policy analyst office in Washington, D.C.

Regent Leavitt suggested it would be helpful to Nevada to know what other states were doing. Dr. Strathe said it was frightening. In good economic times TABOR works well, but in a downturn it creates a ratcheting effect that cannot be escaped until the economy bottoms. In Colorado it was coupled with controlled tuition increases. There could be tuition increases more than twice the rate of inflation. In bad economic times it was 2%, so tuition could not increase more than 4%. When losing 8% to 10% of the budget every six months, 4% tuition revenue does not help. At the same time enrollment was increasing, and it did not do much good to enroll new students because if revenues got too high, they were returned. Dr. Strathe stressed it was something to think through very carefully.

Regent Sisolak asked how many other searches or jobs Dr. Strathe had applied for. He asked if she was looking for a job or this job. Dr. Strathe said she was looking for this job. She was not presently involved in any other search, but was involved in one other search earlier in the year. Regent Rosenberg said information was erroneously reported in one of the newspapers. Dr. Strathe said the University of Tennessee was mentioned, but that was a search six years ago. Dr. Strathe said last year she was asked to consider the deanship at the College of Human Sciences at Iowa State, from where she has three degrees. Her son and wife live there. She went to look at it and withdrew from the search. Dr. Strathe said she never wanted to be a president solely to be a president. A good match with the institution was important; along with the feeling she could make a difference.

Regent Dondero asked if Oklahoma State had a medical school. Dr. Strathe said there was the Oklahoma State University System, which has five campuses. She was located at the main campus. There was also a center for health sciences located in Tulsa. It was considered a separate agency, funded separately from Oklahoma State University. They were budgeted separately, but still part of the system. The president of the College of

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Health Sciences reported to the president and CEO of the system. He was also the dean of the College of Health Sciences and in his deanship he reported to Dr. Strathe.

Vice Chairman Gallagher said this setting with Dr. Strathe was more relaxed and other questions could be asked, rather than the formal questions as in the first interview.

Regent Howard asked about Oklahoma's system. Dr. Strathe said state Regents were appointed by the governor. There was the Board of Regents of Oklahoma State University and the A&M Colleges, covering the five colleges of Oklahoma State University, and also Langston, Connors, Panhandle State, and Northeastern. Similarly, the University of Oklahoma had a Board covering Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, University of Oklahoma and Cameron University. There was a board for the regionals covering the University of Central Oklahoma, Southwestern, etc. There was the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, which was in between a coordinating board and a governing board. For example, if admission standards were changed, Oklahoma State University and the A&M Colleges Board approves, as well as the state Regents. The Chancellor for the state Regents goes to the legislature asking for money and then the money passes back through the Regents to the institutions. It was called formula funding, which Dr. Strathe felt did not work well. On a daily basis, the Council of Presidents meets with the Chancellor. They were more a coordinating board than a governing board. She considered her college board the governing board. Regent Howard felt there were quite a few layers there.

Regent Leavitt asked Dr. Strathe what excited her most about this opportunity. Dr. Strathe said what was most attractive was what she perceived as the fit with the mission of UNR, what her background experiences offered both professionally and personally, and what she knew about students. She felt UNR was capable of changing the lives of students, faculty and staff, and she found that exciting with unlimited possibilities.

Regent Dondero asked how Dr. Strathe worked with high school groups. Dr. Strathe said there was a dual enrollment program. The tuition was paid by the Oklahoma State Regents, which meant it was a tuition waiver. In some cases the districts would pay for the books, which has not always been easy because the number of students with dual enrollments could get very large. High schools in Oklahoma were not as encouraging of this as they should be. There was also concern for students graduating early and missing out on the maturation process. Regent Dondero asked if there was a working relationship with K-12. Dr. Strathe answered affirmatively.

Vice Chairman Gallagher asked if Dr. Strathe had any questions for the Board members.

Dr. Strathe asked if there were two or three things that the next president must attend to in the next 6 months, even if other things were overlooked. Regent Rosenberg responded trust; building the trust between faculty and administration. It has suffered for many reasons, and not all has been administration's fault. He felt it was important to get out

1. Information Only-Candidate Visit with Board of Regents – (Cont'd.)

and about; be visible to students and faculty and show them interest. He commented that UNR was a wonderful campus.

Regent Sisolak said the largest priority was students. There seemed to be a disconnect. Tuition and entrance requirements need to be raised. Financial aid needs attention, as well as the research mission. The students were getting lost in the mix. So many things effect students that are not always considered at the administrative level. The students are the commodity. They face real world problems and sometimes that is overlooked.

Regent Howard felt it was important to have a balance in the treatment of different student constituencies (*gay, Latino, African American*) and they should feel they are treated equally. Among minorities, there is the feeling that one group is receiving more attention than another. There needs to be balance with these student constituencies, which could create tension if not addressed.

Regent Leavitt thought the most important thing the president does would be to assemble the right cabinet. The Board must communicate its expectations very clearly. If emphasis is placed on fundraising, the Board can expect to see less of the president on campus. Everyone needs to be on the same page when evaluating the president.

Regent Rosenberg said Dr. Strathe has been a provost for a long time and was aware of the academic side. He continued that the president needs to know what is going on; faculty, staff, and students need to know the president knows what is going on. No one can abdicate responsibility in favor of doing something else. The job is tough. He questioned how the president can be raising money while still appearing on campus. There could be times the Board expects too much. Dr. Strathe said there were positions that require long, hard work. She agreed that it was critical to assemble a good team, give them the resources and empower them to do their work. The deans need to be experts in their areas, as well as to spend time thinking about what the institution requires as a whole. Everyone wants the same thing.

Regent Schofield agreed that teamwork was important and working together can make it happen.

Regent Howard emphasized how important it is to get to know the legislators and establish an immediate rapport.

Dr. Strathe questioned diversity and what progress the institution had made or needed to make in terms of inclusiveness. Regent Rosenberg said some progress was made over the past few years, but there is still a lot more to do. He remarked there were strides yet to be taken. Recruiting minority faculty is difficult and very expensive. The Native American community is small. Once they leave the reservation, they cannot return. If they set out for an education, they are on a trajectory with only one way to go. Many of them are reluctant to

come to the university because they are afraid they could not go home. It has been the same way for some time, and while efforts have been made, it just does not work

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as well as it might. He suggested that could be an area where Dr. Strathe's experience might help.

Regent Howard said it was important that students feel they are part of the university; make sure their character is built. It is not just a minority, diversity position, but extends across all color lines.

Dr. Strathe said it seemed to her that the notion of diversity was similar to the notion about the institutions, and that they should be celebrating and strengthening the differences.

Vice Chairman Gallagher thanked Dr. Strathe for her interest in the position.

2. Public Comment – None.

3. New Business - None.

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The meeting adjourned at 9:56 a.m.

Fini S. Dobyms
Secretary of the Board