MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Barber National Institute
100 Barber Place, Erie, PA 16507

September 21, 2011

The meeting was called to order at 8:32 a.m. by Dr. Francis Michelini.

Attending:

Erin Agnew	Francis Michelini	Shannon Sullivan
Jim Agras	Ivory Nelson (via phone)	Karen Farmer White
James Barker	Jon Peri	A. Lee Williams
Paul Ferrera	Mollie Phillips	Larry Wittig
Dan Fogarty	Ed Sheehan	

OPENING COMMENTS

Dr. Michelini expressed his thanks to Sandra Edmunds for her work with the Board during her tenure as Deputy Secretary for Postsecondary and Higher Education, and expressed condolences for the recent passing of her mother. Dr. Michelini then introduced and welcomed Ms. Jill Hans as the new Deputy Secretary for Postsecondary and Higher Education.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the July 20, 2011 meeting of the Council of Higher Education were approved on an **Agras/ Peri** motion.

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY HIGHER EDUCATION

Ms. Hans gave an update regarding the following programs:

Teacher Certification: GPA/Praxis Qualifying Test Score

Ms. Hans distributed the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality's updated chart identifying qualifying scores on various PRAXIS exams to corresponding GPAs necessary to earn a teacher certification. She provided Board members with the following background information about the chart:

- Prior to the implementation of the current combined GPA/test score policy, the policy stated that a teacher certification candidate must earn a 3.0 GPA in their teacher preparation program to qualify for certification. Chapter 354.33(6) contained language that allowed a candidate who had a GPA of 2.8 to 2.99 to use a Praxis test score that was one standard deviation higher than the established qualifying score to be approved for certification.

- Many candidates had high GPA's, but missed their content test (Praxis) by a point or two. In response, PDE developed a policy that allowed individuals with a higher than required GPA to qualify for certification with a lower test score based on the same standards of error. A chart labeled "Pennsylvania Department of Education-Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality, GPA-Qualifying Praxis Score" was developed for use in the calculation of a combined GPA/Praxis score.

Mr. Fogarty commented that the state should be mindful that students not achieve the GPA requirements for teacher certification by taking less challenging courses and said the state should be thoughtful about GPA requirements not creating a disincentive to take tougher courses.

Act 24 of 2011

Ms. Hans also provided an update on changes to teacher and school administrator certification requirements that were enacted in Act 21 of 2011 and are now in the process of being implemented by the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality.

- Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents completing a nontraditional route may apply for a Commission which is nonportable. A Commission will be granted if the individual demonstrates:

  a. A graduate degree in business or finance.
  b. Has 4 years of relevant experiences in business, finance or management.
  c. Completes the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PIL) program within two years of receiving the Commission.

- Residency and Intern certificates have been added to the list of certificates qualifying a person to teach; new Residency certificates are designed to address the needs in shortage areas.
- Post Baccalaureate, Intern and Residency certificates may be offered by providers other than institutions of higher education.
- Out-of-state certificates will be awarded to applicants who demonstrate two years of successful teaching experience, hold a Bachelor's degree and pass the required Pennsylvania test.
- Graduate degrees such as a Master's or Doctorate will be accepted in lieu of a Bachelor's degree for entry into a certification program.
- Post Baccalaureate candidates do not need to meet the requirements of six credits of Math and six credits of English for their certification program.

Transfer and Articulation

Ms. Hans provided an update on use of the state's Transfer and Articulation system, which allows college students to save time and money by seamlessly transferring up to 30 credits of foundation courses from one participating college to another and having them apply toward graduation. Information about the state's transfer system is available on the Pennsylvania Transfer and Articulation Center website (PA TRAC), and Ms. Hans reported the website has more than 31,000 visitors between January-August 2011 and nearly two-thirds were first-time users. The site shows students 401,000 ways courses transfer among participating institutions,

and users have requested information from the participating institutions over 20,000 times and viewed transfer profiles for the 33 participating institutions over 91,000 times.

College Access Challenge Grant

Pennsylvania has applied and been awarded the College Access Challenge Grant for 2011-2012. PDE will partner with Project GRAD USA, the Pennsylvania State University and PHEAA to administer the grant. The grant provides resources to support college access services to approximately 40,983 students from high schools and their feeder schools where more than half the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch and more than 25% of student scored below proficient on the PSSA in math or did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Ms. Hans also reported that, in 2011, PDE partnered with PHEAA and GRAD USA to provid the following services through a prior College Access Challenge Grant:

- 51,756 direct services to 7,043 students, 11 high schools and feeder systems
- 26 financial aid workshops resulting in 824 Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) completions.
- 280 financial aid workshops and events to 14,000 parents

Act 101

The 2011-2012 budget transferred the Act 101 program to the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency for continued administration. Ms. Hans reported that PDE is in the process of gathering background information about the program to provide to PHEAA to aid in the transition. The work should be completed by the end of September 2011. Mr. Sheehan asked about the status of PDE staff that previously had responsibility for administering Act 101 programs. Ms. Hans reported that those staff would not be furloughed, but would be reassigned other responsibilities.

Textbook Affordability Committee

Ms. Hans reported that the College Textbook Policies Advisory Committee has met three times in 2011 and that the Committee is on track for presenting its report and recommendations to the Board in 2012. The Committee has heard presentations on the lifecycle and decision points in the textbook acquisition process, as well as update on current policy and legislative trends regarding college textbooks and course materials. At its most recent meeting on July 25, members began fleshing out potential recommendations for Pennsylvania to decrease the cost of textbooks for students.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Janice Whiteman with Gannon University asked for comment on the implication of the standard deviation chart on Title II reporting. Ms. Whiteman's concern is that while students could be certificated under the chart's standards using the standards deviation, they would not be noted as passing the Praxis cut score on the Title II reports required to be filed by colleges and universities

ACTION ITEMS

There were no action items.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

ADJOUNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned.

Stephanie Jones

Stephanie Jones
Administrative Assistant