MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION

333 Market Street, Honors Suite, Harrisburg, PA
March 14, 2012

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Dr. Francis Michelini.

Attending:

Erin Agnew
James Agras (via phone)
James Barker
Wendy Beetlestone
David Collins
Connie Davis
Sen. Andrew Dinniman
Sandra Dungee Glenn
Paul Ferrera
Kirk Hallett
Francis Michelini
Jon Peri
Mollie Phillips
Sen. Jeffery Piccola
Colleen Sheehan
Ed Sheehan
Shannon Sullivan
Karen Farmer White
Lee Williams
Larry Wittig

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the January 12, 2012 meeting of the Council of Higher Education were approved on a **Dungee Glenn/Beetlestone** motion.

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY HIGHER EDUCATION

Ms. L. Jill Hans, Deputy Secretary of Postsecondary and Higher Education, provided an update on the following:

Governor's Advisory Commission for Postsecondary Education

The first meeting of the Governor's Advisory Commission for Postsecondary Education was held on March 12, 2012.

- The Commission membership is comprised of 31 members appointed by the Governor, representing various sectors of postsecondary education, including university Ppresidents, deans, and association presidents, as well as business leaders. The Commission is being led by Senator Rob Wonderling, current President and CEO of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce.

- Governor Corbett and Secretary Tomalis charged the Commission with having a candid conversation about the issues challenging postsecondary education and directed it to focus on actions to sustain the system over the next 10 to 15 years.

- The Commission will meet between now and November to develop a report of its findings that will be issued to the Governor.

- Meetings will be held throughout the state to engage communities in the conversation about the future of Pennsylvania's postsecondary education system.

- During the first meeting, the Commission engaged in dialogue with two presenters regarding perspectives on the value of a postsecondary education. Commission members also worked in small groups focused on addressing more specific challenges.

- The next meeting of the Commission will be on Monday, April 16, 2012 in Harrisburg.

Distance Education Update

- On July 1, 2011 new federal regulations went into effect, supporting the reauthorization of the federal financial aid act (Higher Education Opportunity Act) requiring every provider of distance education to show that it is authorized in every state from which students enroll and receive federal financial aid. States are required to approve each institution by name and maintain a list of approved institutions.

- The United States Department of Education has provided an extension until July 1, 2014 before it will take action to deny financial aid to students if the institution is not authorized.

- Prior to this regulation, Pennsylvania did not regulate the activity of distance education providers that did not have a physical presence in the state. The Department has provided provisional authorization letters valid until June 30, 2012 to institutions that have completed a basic information form requesting authorization.

- The Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education is in the process of finalizing a policy that would formalize the process undertaken this year as well as provide the necessary adjustments to insure oversight and efficiency. The authorization would not include degree-granting authority or authorization to have a physical presence in Pennsylvania.

Teacher Information Management System (TIMS)

- TIMS is a complex piece of software that facilitates the teacher application process in the Commonwealth as well as the hiring process.

- The Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education is working closely with the software vendor to appropriately address various implementation challenges by remedying programming flaws as well as supplementing staff within the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality. Additionally, processes are being adapted and implemented to support the new way of accomplishing the teacher certification process using the TIMS system.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ACTION ITEMS

There were no action items.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

Karen Molchanow/gf

Karen Molchanow
Executive Director