

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF
THE COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES
CLARION UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
MAY 29, 2015
114 CARRIER ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
CLARION CAMPUS, CLARION, PA 16214

8:30 A.M.

I. RECORDING OF ATTENDANCE

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Kifer, Chairperson, with the following Trustees present:

Dr. Syed Ali-Zaidi
Mrs. Milissa Steiner Bauer, Secretary
Mrs. Susanne Burns
Ms. JD Dunbar, Vice Chairperson (via conference phone)
Mr. R. Lee James
Mr. James Kifer, Chairperson (via conference phone)
Ms. Donna Oberlander (via conference phone)
Mr. Randy Seitz

The following Trustee was absent:

Mr. Jeffrey Szumigale

The following members of the University administration attended the meeting:

Mr. Len Cullo, Vice President for Finance and Administration
Dr. Colleen McAleer, Interim Executive Dean, Venango College
Dr. Ronald Nowaczyk, Provost and Academic Vice President
Dr. Karen Whitney, President

II. ACTION ITEMS

A. Approval of Proposed 2015-2016 Locally Set Fees

President Whitney discussed the need to determine student fees for 2015-2016 prior to the next regularly scheduled Council of Trustees meeting on July 16, 2015. Noting the comparative and trend data on fees that had

been provided to the trustees in advance of the meeting, Dr. Whitney opened the discussion to trustee questions.

Mr. Seitz thanked Dr. Whitney and Vice President for Finance and Administration Len Cullo for the information provided to him but expressed concern about the timing for the proposed fee increases and their impact on the decision making of prospective students and their families. Mr. Shreckengost asked what figures had changed since the presentation of proposed fees at the April 23, 2015 Council meeting, where the discussion had been postponed pending additional substantiation. Mr. Cullo noted that fee data presented in April had been based on a per-credit pricing structure that was ultimately not pursued. Dr. Whitney indicated that the revised information also reflected an attempt to provide greater clarity about tuition and the proposed fee increases. She added that under the proposal, total tuition and fees for 2015-2016 would be \$62 higher than for 2014-2015 or a 1% increase.

Dr. Whitney introduced Chartwells Director of Dining Services Jeff MacTaggart to discuss factors contributing to the proposed increase in board rates. Mr. MacTaggart noted that Chartwells' efforts to provide more fresh produce, gluten-free and other options were designed to add value to students' meal plans. He also noted that the outbreak of avian flu was resulting in much higher prices for eggs and ground turkey, both used extensively by Chartwells. Mr. James noted that his concern was less about the increase in board rates than with fees associated with student services such as career and personal counseling, tutoring, and orientation; the Student Center; and the Recreation Center. He asked if those fees could be rolled back approximately \$200 to be more in line with student fees at other PASSHE universities.

Dr. Whitney cited decisions that had been made in the past that the operation of Clarion's Student Center and Recreation Center would rely on student fee revenue rather than state funds. She noted the value of student services and suggested that a cut in fees would likely translate into reductions in staffing and hours of operation. She cautioned against positioning the university as a lowest cost option and noted that consultants had advised that the university's student demographic included a wide range of student/family socioeconomic backgrounds. She also noted the importance of looking not only at what a university charges but also at what students actually pay.

Mr. James asked about a \$77 decrease in the proposed cost of Clarion's lowest suites rate for 2015-2016 as compared to the 2014-2015 rate. Michelle Kealey, Director of Residence Life Services, noted that the lowest suites rate for the new Suites on Main Street would be less than the lowest suites rate at either Valley View or Campus View suites last year.

Ms. Kealey agreed to look into factors that contributed to suite rates at PASSHE universities with rates lower than Clarion and to provide that information to President Whitney.

Mr. Seitz commended the University for distinguishing itself with new programs in data analytics and health sciences. At the same time, he noted his concern that the proposed fee increases could hurt enrollment in less cutting-edge areas. Ms. Dunbar suggested that a better understanding of the factors that drive student/family decision making in choosing a college would be helpful for the trustees. Dr. Whitney cited a recent consultant study of price elasticity and brand value at Clarion University. Mrs. Bauer asked to see a copy of the study and Dr. Whitney promised to provide copies to all the trustees.

At the request of Trustee Seitz, Ms. Marissa Kealey, outgoing Clarion University Student Senate President, shared what factors had led to her decision to attend Clarion University. She indicated that while cost was a big factor, her fit and comfort level with the university were just as important. Dr. Nowaczyk noted research showing that a school's programs, reputation, and facilities were all factors that influenced the college decision.

Mr. Kifer noted the absence of a Recreation Center charge for five of the fourteen PASSHE institutions on the chart of comparative data that had been provided to the trustees. As a result, he noted, Clarion's number-one ranking for total fees was not a true ranking. Dr. Whitney observed that recreation facilities at those institutions could be supported by other revenue sources. Mr. Cullo added that Clarion University had the lowest amount of direct debt within the System. Mrs. Bauer pointed to trend data that showed that over the last three years, total undergraduate tuition, fees, room and board had increased \$294 (13-14), \$331 (14-15), and \$277 (proposed for 15-16), making the proposed 15-16 increase the lowest in three years. She noted that she would like to see the total package of tuition, fees, room and board for all PASSHE universities.

Mr. James asked about the difference between "tuition" and the "Instructional Support Fee." Dr. Whitney explained that tuition was the basic fee established by the PASSHE Board of Governors for providing educational services while the Instructional Support Fee may be used to support instructional equipment, lab supplies, and other costs associated with general instructional operations.

Ms. Dunbar suggested a call to question and Mr. Kifer put the pending question, the approval of proposed locally set fees for 2015-2016, to a vote.

A motion was made by Mrs. Burns, seconded by Mr. James, that the following resolution be approved.

RESOLVED, that the Council of Trustees, Clarion University, approve the proposed locally set fees for 2015-2016 including the following:

Instructional Support Fee (Paid by all students)
Student Fee (Paid by Clarion campus and Clarion Online students)
Student Center Fee (Paid by Clarion campus students)
Recreation Center Fee (Paid by Clarion campus students)
Student Support Fee (Paid by Venango campus students)
Room Rate (Paid by Clarion campus students in university-owned housing)
Board Rate (Paid by Clarion campus students in university-owned housing and others)

Mr. Seitz asked if the resolution could be modified to separate the proposed room and board rates from the remaining proposed fees. Rather than modifying her motion, Mrs. Burns suggested continuing with a vote on the pending motion.

A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

Syed Ali-Zaidi	YES
Milissa Bauer	YES
Susanne Burns	YES
JD Dunbar	YES
Lee James	NO
James Kifer	YES
Donna Oberlander	NO
Randy Seitz	NO
Howard Shreckengost	YES

The motion carried.

B. Approval of Proposed Nursing Course Fee

Dr. Whitney introduced Dr. Ron Nowaczyk to present information on the proposed Nursing Course Fee. Dr. Nowaczyk indicated that the Nursing Course Fee was being proposed as a three-year pilot program to address operating deficits in high-cost, high-demand programs such as Nursing. He further indicated that under the proposal, a per-credit course fee would be added to five Nursing clinical courses which, for the current year, had a combined deficit of approximately \$500,000.

Dr. Nowaczyk explained that three other PASSHE schools had introduced similar fees that had been structured as either a tuition surcharge, instructional fee, or lab fee affecting all students taking STEM and Health courses. He added that Clarion's fee would impact only Nursing students not other science students. In answer to a question from Mr. James, Dr. Nowaczyk noted that if the Nursing Course Fee were found to adversely affect enrollment, it could be withdrawn or modified in future years. Dr. Colleen McAleer, Interim Executive Dean of Venango College, asked the trustees to consider approving all three years of the proposed incremental per-credit Nursing Course Fee. She noted that the fee was fully supported by the Nursing faculty, that Clarion's Nursing graduates do well in the job market, and that the Nursing program was barely breaking even under the current pricing structure.

A motion was made by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Seitz, to approve the following resolution.

RESOLVED, that the Council of Trustees, Clarion University, approve the establishment of the proposed Nursing Course Fee, effective fall 2015.


A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

Syed Ali-Zaidi	YES
Milissa Bauer	YES
Susanne Burns	YES
JD Dunbar	YES
Lee James	YES
James Kifer	YES
Donna Oberlander	YES
Randy Seitz	YES
Howard Shreckengost	YES

The motion carried unanimously.

IX. ADJOURNMENT – The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted


Milissa Steiner Bauer, Secretary
Council of Trustees