

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

- DATE:** Wednesday, January 24, 2018
- TIME:** 3:00 P.M.
- PLACE:** Room WW55
- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Winder, Nonini, Den Hartog, Guthrie, Crabtree, Buckner-Webb, and Ward-Engelking
- ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** None
- NOTE:** The sign-in sheet, testimonies and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the committee's office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.
- CONVENED:** **Chairman Mortimer** called the Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:00 p.m.
- RS 25707** **Relating to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Education (STEM); Revise, Amend, and Technical Changes. Marilyn Whitney**, Senior Special Assistant for Education and Government Services, Office of the Governor (Governor) presented **RS 25707**. She stated this legislation is to clarify responsibilities and functions of the STEM Action Center Board (Center). She explained the history of Center and stated the changes were expected based on how the Center grew and how the board functioned. **Ms. Whitney** said this legislation clarifies the nature of the Center's board to reflect the current practices and board member terms.
- MOTION:** **Senator Nonini** moved to send **RS 25707** to print. **Senator Ward-Engelking** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.
- PRESENTATION:** **University of Idaho (UI), Dr. Chuck Staben**, President, said he will share the progress of the UI and the background of higher education. He shared the three myths about higher education and spoke to the three facts of higher education. He reported the breakdown of student debt percentages and the groups that rely on it (Attachment 1).
- Dr. Staben** updated the Committee on the UI's progress in three key areas: 1.) improving the state's college going culture by enrolling more qualified students from Idaho; 2.) Ensuring more UI students persist from enrollment through graduation and on to their careers; and 3.) connecting students to the UI research enterprise, which engages with communities across Idaho to fulfill the land-grant university mission.
- Dr. Staben** addressed the questions which were sent out prior to the presentation and explained each in detail. Those questions and responses follow:
1. What is UI doing to reduce costs to students and provide greater accessibility. **Dr. Staben** said UI has \$25 million in institutional student aid, they serve 37 percent first-generation students and 40 percent of the students are Pell Grant eligible. Scholarships are renewable for four years, they are engaged with the SBE's direct admissions program, eliminate all application fees to Idaho residents, joined the Applied Idaho Common Application system, conduct outreach systems in the outlying areas, online degrees, and have signed a joint enrollment agreement with the College of Eastern Idaho.

2. What are you doing to ensure dual credits and concurrent classes have the necessary rigor and credibility that college courses require. **Dr. Staben** explained UI's commitment to the Fast Forward Program, and detailed how dual credit students get through school faster, with less debt, and hold a higher GPA.
3. As workplace requirements continue to rise, more jobs will require individuals to possess advanced credentials and degrees in the broad mix of academic, technical, and workplace skills that employers prefer. How does your coursework and curriculum meet the workforce needs and demands to make students more employable. **Dr. Staben** said every college at the UI works closely with the advisory boards which are composed of segment industry leaders. The partnership allows the colleges to possess an understanding of the need in the workforce. He gave a variety of examples of how courses have been modified to meet those demands. He outlined internship programs.
4. What is being done to retain students year-to-year. What incentives and resources are available to ensure on time degree completion. **Dr. Staben** explained the programs: VandalStar, a data management tool; centralized advising; Vandal Ideas Project; supplemental instruction; co-remediation approaches; and Complete College America.

Dr. Staben explained two things that are not being done today that he would like to see done for the future of higher education. Those were as follows:

1. Enhance need-based financial aid for students.
2. Deliver more targeted programs to ensure college go-on. Summer access to guidance counseling. He recommended embedding UI counselors into the high schools.

Dr. Staben emphasized the importance of higher education. He noted emerging jobs require higher education and result in better wages. He reported the low go-on rate and stated that less than half of the qualified Idaho students attend college right after high school. He said he was on the Governor's Higher Education Task Force. He emphasized the UI is dedicated to the improvement of the college-going culture and detailed the programs available from UI. He highlighted the graduate and research programs and cited the important work of the WWAMI (Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho) medical school. He said as the land-grant university for Idaho, the UI's presence is in almost every county and extension offices in each of the regions help farmers and 4-H programs.

Senator Winder stated there is a decline in student enrollment and asked if it is impacting the financial condition of UI. **Dr. Staben** replied the financial condition is good; the result is a good bond rating. He stated UI is meeting industry standards for financial well-being.

Chairman Mortimer asked if there are incentives to get new students on to the campus for summer programs. **Dr. Staben** replied it is important to remain engaged with high school students through the summer. He suggested more innovative counseling approaches be undertaken. He explained the plans to get students on the campus during the summer and said he is concerned this program will only attract the best students when the goal is to get more students on campus.

Senator Crabtree asked if there is a way to influence high school students to go on to college, rather than continue to work in a minimum wage position. **Dr. Staben** said 53 percent of women and 38 percent of men will go on to college right after high school. Idaho has the lowest go-on rate for men and biggest differential between men and women in the United States. He explained the best way to get high school students to go to college is with counseling and discussion of the merits of a college education.

Vice Chairman Thayn commented on the importance of embedding counselors in high schools. He said \$5 million has been proposed in the budget for high school counselors. He asked if those monies should go to colleges and universities to provide the counselors. **Dr. Staben** replied those monies should be prioritized to make a real difference. It probably would be better to not thinly distribute those funds across all Idaho high schools. He gave the example of Georgia State University's approach to addressing the go-on rate in their state. He emphasized the importance and effectiveness of innovative and broad-based statewide approaches.

PRESENTATION: Idaho State University (ISU), Dr. Arthur Vailas, President, remarked that he has spent the last 40 years in higher education and is looking forward to his retirement.

Dr. Vailas said he appreciated the questions that were given to him to discuss for today's presentation. His responses were as follows:

1. What is ISU doing to reduce costs to students and provide greater accessibility. **Dr. Vailas** stated that 85 percent of the students at ISU are on financial aid. ISU is sensitive to the finances of the student. He elaborated on the following programs: financial bridge program, counseling to encourage students to stay in school, tuition lock program, discounted credits, the acceptance of all credits from integrated learning, and curriculum alignment activities.
2. What are you doing to ensure dual credits and concurrent classes have the necessary rigor and credibility that college courses require: **Dr. Vailas** said ISU has over 2,000 students in this program. The retention and graduation rate from this type a student is high. They work with the high schools to ensure the courses meet the ISU standards.
3. As workplace requirements continue to rise, more jobs will require individuals to possess advanced credentials and degrees in the broad mix of academic, technical, and workplace skills that employers prefer. How does your coursework and curriculum meet the workforce needs and demands to make students more employable? **Dr. Vailas** said all the colleges have advisory boards and there are industry members as faculty staff. He detailed the career path internship program.

Dr. Vailas said many adult learners attend ISU. He outlined the specific provisions needed for their degree completion.

Dr. Vailas described the two things that are not being done today that he would like to see done for the future of higher education. Those were as follows:

1. Tuition and residency flexibility to the border states' students.
2. Incentives to get businesses to contribute to higher education

Senator Guthrie said involving the business community is a key to the institutions' success. He expressed his gratitude in getting to know Dr. Vailas and appreciates his candidness and courage in tackling tough issues. He said that universities need different people at different times and Dr. Vailas was the right person at the right time. He thanked him for his service.

Chairman Mortimer thanked Dr. Vailas for his service to ISU and wished him well in his retirement.

Senator Den Hartog relayed the story of professors reaching out to student recruits to make those students feel welcomed on the campuses. She said she is encouraged to hear that ISU is doing more individual outreach. **Dr. Vailas** replied ISU is looking to do more of the type of outreach. He said personal contact can help first-generation students succeed in higher education.

Senator Nonini stated he and Dr. Vailas served on the same subcommittee for the Governor's Higher Education Task Force Committee (HETFC). He asked for Dr. Vailas' opinion regarding the HETFC recommendation of an executive to oversee the institutions. **Dr. Vailas** replied higher education is a business. He stated 25 percent of the mission is supported by State funds. Higher education institutions must raise the other 75 percent to execute their mission. He reviewed for the Committee how the institutions must operate to be in alignment with the set requirements. He said he believes it would be in the best interest of Idaho to study this proposal. It is a reasonable investment to have efficiencies in higher education.

S 1210

Relating to Higher Education; Amend and Technical Corrections. Tracie Bent, Chief Planning and Policy Officer, Idaho State Board of Education (SBE) presented **S 1210**. She said the proposed legislation is regarding the formation of the College of Eastern Idaho (CEI). She explained the transition process from the Eastern Idaho Technical College (EITC) to CEI. She said many of the changes are technical changes to complete the transition. She explained colleges are established in Idaho Code. This legislation removes EITC from Idaho Code and updates the sections that previously referenced EITC to CEI. She explained the accreditation process makes the transition seamless for students. She explained the proposed changes to the Committee.

MOTION:

Vice Chairman Thayn moved to send **S 1210** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Crabtree** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

S 1222

Relating to Career Education; Provide Legislative Intent, Amend, Establish Provisions, and Sunset Date. Ms. Bent presented **S 1222** and explained the proposed legislation will create two programs; the first in this fiscal year and the second starting the following year.

Ms. Bent detailed the proposed legislation which will establish the programs and revealed the sunset dates. She briefed the Committee about the 2014 program which was established for high-quality agricultural and natural resource programs. The proposed legislation would create similar programs for the following Career Technical Education (CTE) areas: business management and marketing, engineering and technology, family and consumer science, health sciences, and skilled technical sciences. **Ms. Bent** said the legislation includes the ability to use funding towards technical assistance. She outlined for the Committee all the changes in the proposed legislation and explained the legislation stipulates the SBE can promulgate rules. She stated the Division of CTE supports this legislation.

Vice Chairman Thayn wondered if this is a bill to promulgate rules. He said he would like to hear the details CTE has for the program.

Senator Nonini stated his concerns with the fiscal note and asked what will be funded. **Ms. Bent** stated the funding for either program will be based on appropriation. The reason for the ambiguity in the funding amounts is dependent on what the Legislature chooses to appropriate.

Senator Guthrie asked if the monies for the quality programs incentives will be kept separate of the agricultural and natural resources funds. **Ms. Bent** replied in the affirmative. She cited Idaho Code § 33-1629, which specifies funding for the agricultural and natural resources program.

TESTIMONY: **Dwight Johnson**, Administrator, CTE, spoke in support of the proposed legislation. He explained the overall goals and detailed the process taken to develop meaningful matrixes. He gave examples of the student skill matrixes to determine student progress and spoke about the funding incentives.

Vice Chairman Thayn asked what is the monetary value of the grant. **Mr. Johnson** replied the grant amounts will be similar to the agricultural and natural resources grants and are based on need. **Vice Chairman Thayn** asked for more information about the grant rewarding process. **Mr. Johnson** replied grants will be given for high-quality performance and for program improvement. **Vice Chairman Thayn** asked if this approach is successful. **Mr. Johnson** replied the high-quality grants are successful and the funds for improvement grants will help programs become successful. The high-quality and the improvement incentive grants are a two-pronged approach to developing better quality programs.

Senator Nonini asked if the appropriation will fund the teaching of soft skills such as timeliness and professionalism. **Mr. Johnson** replied the soft skills are embedded into the CTE programs. The expectation is that attending class is the same as going into the workplace.

Senator Den Hartog asked if the reason the standards are being placed into the rules is to allow for more flexibility in the program. **Mr. Johnson** replied in the affirmative.

Rod Gramer, President, Idaho Business for Education, spoke in support of the incentive program. He emphasized the shortage of CTE students in the workplace. He explained this incentive program is being used in other states to encourage more students to study CTE and earn workforce ready certificates.

Chairman Mortimer asked Mr. Gramer how he believes this funding will incentivize increased enrollment. **Mr. Gramer** explained the dilemma of the CTE careers. He said to change the cultural bias against CTE is to create a financial incentive to get more students to consider CTE as an educational pathway.

MOTION: **Senator Guthrie** moved to send **S 1222** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Ward-Engelking** seconded the motion.

Vice Chairman Thayn stated this vote is a recognition of the successes from the division of CTE. He said the bill is short on details, but he is voting based on trust.

The motion passed by **voice vote**.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:32 p.m.

Senator Dean M. Mortimer
Chair

LeAnn Mohr
Secretary