

10/8/09

STATE APSCUF PRESIDENT STEVE HICKS ISSUES REPORT ON PASSHE BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING...

The PASSHE Board of Governors met on Wednesday and Thursday, Oct. 7th & 8th, and what they did NOT do is probably more notable than what they did.

The big DID NOT was on the budget. Typically, the October BoG meeting distributes and discusses the next year's budget, along with the preliminary figure that PASSHE needs from the state appropriation.

That did not happen this October. It was announced that things changed because of the current state budget situation.

Instead, Vice Chancellor for Finance Jim Dillon announced that his office would meet on campuses after the final budget was passed to lay out the numbers.

The second item NOT discussed was the 30 graduate/low enrollment concept. Nowhere in the Academic Affairs Committee meeting on Wednesday afternoon, or the report to the whole on Thursday morning, did the much distributed spreadsheet or its consequences get mentioned.

The word retrenchment was never used at the meeting, either.

The biggest news was a presentation Wednesday about current enrollment. It is a new record, with total students up 3.7% -- almost double what they were projecting. The enrollment number is 116,935. Every school showed an enrollment increase, with Edinboro the highest at 8% and Cheyney at the bottom with a fractional increase.

Otherwise, the items of business were not earth-shattering. In his remarks Thursday morning, the Chancellor indicated that the system would cut back on CUO's (no one ever explained the acronym) on campuses by 20%; he also said that his office would not take any share of federal stimulus money that might be passed down. FYI: the Office of the Chancellor, by policy, is budgeted at .5% of the PASSHE budget; the current guesses on stimulus money are in the neighborhood of \$40 million. The Chancellor's announcement indicates a "tightening" of approx \$200,000.

The Board spent some time in Executive Session, which is supposed to mean they are talking about personnel. Since there was no announcement as to what they were discussing, we can only speculate. They were in exec session for over 2 hours Thursday morning, the first half and a little with the university presidents in the room.

During the public session, I was the only one to speak. My topic was the articulation legislation, which is going through the fiscal code any moment now (it passed in the Senate version Monday night), trying to outline the difficulties of matching a community college curriculum with one of our schools', and the problems of expectations on the students' part, or curriculum on the university's (or accrediting agency's) part.

It was an uneventful Board meeting; they planned on a conference call when the budget is set to lay out next year.

