

MINUTES OF THE PRESIDENT’S ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
FRIDAY, JANUARY 22, 2010, 8:30 A.M.
AL SNIPES BOARD ROOM

Present: President Sechrist, Dianne Broyles, Terri Walker, Michael Punches, Michael Machiorlatti, Cecilia Pittman, Darin Behara, Molly Henderson, Cheryl Stanford, Mike Reeves, Joan Sublett, Lori Johnson, Sally Streb, Jason Howard, Nicholas Webb, Lydia Rucker, Paige Landreth, Pat Berryhill, and Stu Harvey.

Absent: Paul Buckelew, Akram Taghavi-Burris, Luther Trent, Denny Myers, Virgil Teter, Tamara Duncan, John Claybon, Tino Ceballos, and Alexandra Wilkes.

President Sechrist welcomed the President’s Advisory Council (PAC) representatives to the meeting.

President Sechrist provided a review of the questions asked at the “Lunches with the President” during the Spring Planning and Prep Week. The following are responses to the questions:

1. QUESTION/CONCERN: Will the reduction of state funds to OCCC impact the funding for upcoming construction projects such as the new Performing Arts Theater?

RESPONSE: The reduction in state funds will impact our operational budget, but not the budget for major construction projects. The funds for the Performing Arts Theater are a combination of funds from bonds, private funding raising efforts, and a master lease/purchase program—all of which must be used for the Performing Arts Theater. Therefore, since we will have the funds in hand, we will proceed with construction beginning late in the fall of this year. Also, the current economy has resulted in lowered construction costs—making it wise to proceed as soon as possible.

President Sechrist also mentioned that phase one of the new signage and way-finder system has been funded through the Section 13 Offset Budget (funds that can only be used for capital improvements). Names of buildings and centers will replace “entry number” signs in the coming weeks. Entrances will still have special number displayed but will be primarily used for emergency identification. When the signs on the exterior of the buildings go up, we will be directing visitors to building names rather than entrance numbers. Additional phases include upgrading our exterior “monument” signs and directional signs inside of the buildings.

2. QUESTION/CONCERN: Will OCCC go to a four-day week or close at noon on Fridays in the summer to save utility and operational costs?

RESPONSE: Probably not. Given the significant number of events already scheduled on Friday and Saturday throughout the summer—many of which provide revenue to the College—it would be difficult to fully close the College on Fridays and Saturdays. In addition to the events already scheduled, many of our students use the Library and

the Testing Center on Fridays and Saturdays. Alternatives to closing that are still being reviewed include flexible schedules and additional administrative leave time with pay.

3. QUESTION/CONCERN: Is OCCC considering an early retirement package to reduce personnel costs?

RESPONSE: Yes, an early retirement package is being considered. However, the analysis is still being reviewed. We will only move forward with a package if long-term personnel costs can be reduced—which would mean that departments would have to be willing to not replace a significant number of the positions impacted for several years to come. Presently it is unclear if this makes good financial sense for the College—but yes, it is under review.

4. QUESTION/CONCERN: What are the prospects for merit raises in the next couple of years? If no raises can be funded for several years, does our merit system make sense?

RESPONSE: The prospects for raises in the next few years are not good. Oklahoma continues to have a shortfall in revenue that impacts the operational budget of OCCC—where most employees' salaries and benefits are included. Our merit-based system of raises only works when there is a steady increase in revenue to fund the raises. There is a commitment, to the degree possible, to consider the past merit ratings when increased funds make raises possible.

5. QUESTION/CONCERN: Is OCCC considering furloughs or elimination of positions to reduce personnel costs?

RESPONSE: Not at this time. With the increase in enrollment, all departments are serving/instructing the students with existing personnel—additional adjuncts have been hired to accommodate the increase. Education is dependent on faculty and staff to accomplish the mission. Therefore, a high priority will be to maintain our current staffing and full salaries.

6. QUESTION/CONCERN: Will OCCC continue the current benefits package or will it be reduced to save costs?

RESPONSE: A high priority will be to continue the current benefits package.

7. QUESTION/CONCERN: Is a tuition increase for next year being considered?

RESPONSE: Yes, a modest increase is being considered for next year to partially offset the reduction in state funding.

8. QUESTION/CONCERN: What is the status of the John Glenn Elementary School and the plans for the new OCCC Family and Community Education Center?

RESPONSE: The Western Heights School District remains committed to donating the vacated John Glenn Elementary School to OCCC, but the property has not yet been legally transferred to OCCC. We are currently leasing the facility for a nominal fee. Through the excellent work of our Facilities Management staff, we are in the process of

getting a portion of the building ready for our Community Education (Adult Basic Education, English as Second Language, GED Preparation, summer College for Kids) program to move into the building early in March. Our plans to move the Child Development Center into the building are on hold until we own the building—which we hope will take place this spring.

9. What is the status of the sale of the John Massey Center and the plans for the new OCCC John Massey Center?

RESPONSE: The final closing on the sale of the building is scheduled for early March. The sale agreement allows OCCC to remain in the building for 24 months, rent-free, after the sale. The proceeds of the sale will be used to build a new facility or renovate existing space to move the functions back to the main campus. Any new construction will be consistent with the OCCC Master Site Plan approved by the Board of Regents last year.

10. QUESTION/CONCERN: When will the space allocation request decisions be made and announced?

RESPONSE: We have been communicating with the impacted departments and plan to also announce the approved plans to all employees in the future.

11. The Institutional Policies Committee membership and minutes are not easily available. Can the membership and agendas be placed on the employee webpage?

RESPONSE: Yes, the membership and agendas for the Institutional Policies Committee will be available on the employee homepage.

12. Is the administration still considering OCCC becoming a non-tobacco campus?

RESPONSE: Yes, this will probably happen at some point. A final decision and implementation date is still under review.

President Sechrist stated President's Cabinet is scheduled to review suggestions on Monday, January 25, that PAC representatives shared at the December PAC meeting concerning non-monetary ways that the College might reward or recognize faculty and staff.

A PAC representative asked if sidewalks on the north side of the library building could be widened or redesigned, using money from the Section 13 Offset Budget, since these funds can only be used for capital improvements. It was mentioned that handicapped students in wheelchairs often must move off the sidewalk onto the grass or mud because the sidewalk is not wide enough. President Sechrist responded by stating that the College could possibly look into this with Section 13 Offset Budget money.

A PAC representative expressed thanks to all the faculty and staff that assisted with Opening Day. Approximately 350 students participated in Opening Day.

President Sechrist expressed appreciation to the Facilities Management staff for all the work they are doing at the Family and Community Education (FACE) Center. He stated that the College significantly reduced the cost to ready a portion of the facility for use because the College's Facilities Management staff completed the work rather than hiring outside companies.

President Sechrist thanked the PAC representatives for their input, and the meeting adjourned.