

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

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Missouri Higher Education System Review
Coordinating Board for Higher Education
September 8, 2016

DESCRIPTION

In June the Coordinating Board directed the Department of Higher Education to conduct a systematic review of the state's system of higher education, which included the establishment of a task force and defined its scope of work. This agenda item provides an update on progress since the June meeting.

Background

The Coordinating Board's statutory authority for system coordination and mission review are well established and were described in some detail in the June agenda item. In addition, the recently-completed *Blueprint for Higher Education* envisions a comprehensive study of Missouri higher education and recommended the state improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of its education system.

System Review Task Force

The Higher Education System Task Force met on July 14, 2016, in Jefferson City (see Attachment A for the roster of Task Force members). At the meeting, Dr. Rusty Monhollon, Assistant Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Task Force Chair, reviewed the Task Force's purpose, objectives, and charge, as well as the CBHE's goals for the review.

The Task Force held a lengthy discussion on a range of issues, the most significant of which was the use of an external consultant. About the same time the department had finalized a contract with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) the governor restricted funds the General Assembly had appropriated to the MDHE to hire an external consultant and to conduct this review. Task Force members generally agreed that there were many advantages to having well-respected experts play a major role in the review, and that it was important to find the funds to do this work. The Task Force also walked through an overview of Missouri's higher education system, discussed relevant statutes, rules, policies, and priorities that need to be examined

In response, the Chief Academic Officers from the Council on Public Higher Education, the Missouri Community College Association, and the MDHE agreed to contribute funds for the purpose of hiring NCHEMS to assist with the review. While the currently committed funding will only complete a portion of the work originally envisioned for the consultants, the revised work plan continues to put this process on a reasonable timeline for completion by the previously established deadlines. MDHE staff has also explored other options for funding this project, including contacts with several non-profit grant organizations.

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With the engagement of NCHEMS as consultants, Commissioner of Higher Education Zora Mulligan, Deputy Commissioner Leroy Wade, and Dr. Monhollon met with Dennis Jones and Aims McGuinness from NCHEMS on Aug. 26, 2016 to discuss the scope of NCHEMS' participation in the project. Planning is currently underway for the next meeting of the task force in late September, which will include participation and facilitation by NCHEMS staff.

Conclusion

The Higher Education System Review is a major undertaking by the Coordinating Board, MDHE staff, and the higher education community in Missouri. Given the rapid changes in the higher education environment, both from a state and national perspective, it is an essential task if Missouri is to be a national leader in providing high quality postsecondary education that will equip Missourians with the personal and professional skills to succeed in the 21st century.

STATUTORY REFERENCE

Section 173.005 – Department of Higher Education created, Coordinating Board duties

Section 173.020 – Responsibilities of the Coordinating Board

Section 173.030 – Additional Responsibilities

RECOMMENDED ACTION

This is an information item only.

ATTACHMENT(S)

Attachment A: Higher Education System Review Task Force roster

Attachment B: Higher Education System Review Task Force scope of work and charge