Meeting Minutes for Friday, November 14, 2014

Location: RDMT 322


Meeting Called to Order: 10 a.m.

President's Items:

Jane Nichols stood in for President Sheehan as she was on leave.

New Governance Structure for Community Colleges—Institutional Advisory Committee

- NSHE formed a new Community College Committee which is currently ad hoc, likely to become a standing committee in December
- Creation of Vice Chancellor position, advocate for community colleges
- Institutional Advisory Committee will act as “mini” Board for each college. It will be comprised of community members appointed by the Chancellor and approved by the Board of Regents
- This will be important to have as a community voice during the upcoming legislative session

Overview of November 4, 2014 Nevada College Collaborative Presidents' Retreat

- This item will have to be addressed upon Dr. Sheehan’s return

StraighterLine Program

- Proposal was submitted to TMCC to consider partnering with a third party company that offers courses to businesses for their employees. Company is not accredited however in reviewing their curriculum it was determined that some courses fall within the accepted American Council on Education’s (ACE) standards. TMCC accepts ACE certified credits.
- TMCC and the Washoe County School District have contracted with StraighterLine for tutoring for number of years; a number of large corporations in Las Vegas contract with StraighterLine for courses for their employees.
- Intent is to use as a recruitment tool. Once student has completed the StraighterLine program, they may want to look at completing any additional (online) courses to meet the associate program requirements. Different method to attract adult learners and offer services to local businesses.
- Courses in which credit is being accepted: Nursing 140, Political Science 101, Criminal Justice 101. Credits once accepted by TMCC are transferable to UNR.
- In Las Vegas. contract is between the student and their employer. The employer is the one paying for the services from StraighterLine.

Performing Arts Center

- This item will have to be addressed upon Dr. Sheehan’s return
Campus Highlights:

Dr. Jane Nichols gave an update on the implementation of the Jump Start program (official announcement to be released later that afternoon). It will provide an opportunity for dual enrollment for high school students; it is modeled after the program offered by Western Nevada College. WNC experienced a large bump in enrollment after starting this program. There are concerns that it will be seen as competition with existing high school A/P courses. TMCC is aware of those concerns and is looking to start out offering this opportunity for elective courses (i.e. Music Appreciation) and will predominantly include online courses. High school students wishing to participate will need approval from their Principal and/or Counselor to enroll. It is NSHE policy to offer the courses at $50 (plus additional fees and cost of any required textbooks) for online courses, while classes attended in person would be offered at a 25% discount (plus additional fees and cost of required textbooks). Washoe County School District has offered to pay for courses for students whose principals and/or counselors determine there is a need for assistance. TMCC has created a Jump Start Coordinator position to help with oversight, providing extra attention to the program and the success of its students. Dr. Nichols thought it would be a good recruitment tool and answered questions related to student eligibility, FERPA, and the policy/agreement students would be required to adhere to.

Dr. Nichols announced that she had just signed off on a change to the audit policy. Previously students wanting to change from a grade to an audit had to submit the change within the first two weeks of the semester. This deadline has been changed to align with the withdrawal deadline. For students wanting to change from audit to a letter grade, the timeline remains the same. This change would be effective starting in the Spring semester and has been approved by Faculty Senate. Discussion followed regarding how audits are different than F’s, FN’s, and W’s in terms of State funding.

Dr. Nichols relayed that TMCC would have an accreditation visit in September/October 2015. The accreditation committee is working on documents now that will be disseminated in forums in February/March for review.

Amanda Sagun reviewed some achievements in her area:

- Dr. Precious Hall established a special program in her first year at TMCC working with Washoe County Social Services. She has connected with 30+ students who have been in foster care. She counsels each one individually and monitors to ensure a successful start to their community college career.

- Dr. John Reid is planning to again work the WCSD Social Studies teachers during the summer.

- Dr. Paul Davis is serving as a faculty member on the National Security Institute at UNLV, a graduate program that offers certification in National Security. He is recognized as an international expert on Terrorism.

- Dean Fred Lokken was serving on the Law-Related Education Committee of the Nevada Bar Association. He is continuing to host the District 2 We the People competition where he now served as a district and state judge. Dean Lokken is also working with Project Citizen, a group that promotes improved civic literacy and engagement. He just recruited Henry Sotelo to work with the Mock Trials project – Nevada is working to host the national mock trials competition in 2018 – Dean Lokken will work with planning and preparation for that event.

- USA Today recognized Dr. Sharon Lowe in their top 25 professors and Junior and Community Colleges! (http://college.usatoday.com/2014/10/21/rate-my-professors-reveals-top-professor-hottest-professor-of-2014/)

Open Discussion:

- Progress on Proposals for Four Year Degrees (Sharon Lowe)
  Dr. Nichols relayed that efforts were still being made to present the Board of Regents with a proposal that would allow TMCC to offer four or five baccalaureate programs. The proposal timeline had been extended, Dr. Nichols hoped it would go in front of the Board of Regents in the Spring.
• Request to Look at Possible Policy for Students after a Specified Number of Unsuccessful Attempts (Jeff Olsen)
Concerns were raised about students that enroll and re-enroll courses a number of times without successful completion for a myriad of reasons. It was unfair to other students, especially in courses with limited capacity. The issue had been addressed by the Faculty Senate a number of years ago, but no action had been taken to implement a policy. Discussion at that time included a possible higher fee for students with three or more F’s similar to the overage fee.

• Memo from Chancellor Regarding Remedial E-Learning
Concerns were expressed in regard to the memo sent out by Chancellor Klaich regarding the use an online third party as an option for remedial Math and English. Dr. Nichols said the memo was a result of an effort to look at statewide distance learning. The memo recommended that institutions work together to make it easier for students, as a part of that there was a minority report requesting that TMCC and UNR start a pilot project looking at outside instruction for remedial courses. Dr. Sheehan met with the Deans and it was decided that the Math Department would not be participating. The English Department opted to look for a third party vendor of their own choosing to work with a specified cohort. Discussion followed regarding data about the success of online remedial courses, use of the courses, and the ability for remedial courses to lead to degree completion.

• Change in the Public Information Office (Beverly Bavaro)
PIO will be undergoing some restructuring and organizational changes. With the increased need for TMCC to market itself to the community, PIO has been drawn into performing many functions beyond answering questions from the press/media and informational outreach. They are looking to “rebrand” the office as more of the communications and marketing office for the college. Beverly asked that Web Services be a part of the discussion as the website is a key element in communication and marketing.

• Development of Regular Communication to Send out to Faculty/Staff (Jane Nichols)
Dr. Nichols said she recently was thinking of a way to improve communications within her division and wondered if it would be helpful to start a regular newsletter that would include information such as the items being shared in these meetings. There was positive feedback with questions about frequency and compilation of the news items. John Frederick relayed that academic support services was starting a newsletter for part time faculty in January.

• Surveys for Students that Withdraw (Jane Nichols/Amanda Sagun)
Institutional Research is conducting a student survey to gather information about students that have withdrawn from a course. Preliminary numbers are showing a decrease in the number of W’s which is good news. The WebCollege is also conducting a survey for students who withdraw from online courses. Discussion followed regarding a perception that TMCC was encouraging F’s. Dr. Nichols said student success is always the priority, if a student is absolutely failing the course, then of course they should withdraw. Often students may feel like they are failing, but after talking to the instructor, they realize that they are not too far behind and are able to salvage their class grade. She felt it was good to encourage the ongoing discussion between students and instructors. TMCC has a high withdrawal rate out of NSHE organizations, it’s not good for students nor the institution. The “W” discussion and changes in policy should always be centered on student success first. It was suggested that maybe the extra efforts to deter students from withdrawing be reframed. Both Kevin and John felt they may not have been able to retain students they contacted after a decision was made to withdraw, but it was a great opportunity for student contact and was very well received by the students. There was a desire to poll instructors who contacted students after they withdrew to learn about what kind of feedback they got.
Future Agenda Items—Next Meeting February 27, 2015

- Overview of November 4, 2014 Nevada College Collaborative Presidents’ Retreat
- Performing Arts Center
- TMCC Bi-Weekly Communications (Newsletter)

Meeting Adjourned: 11:35