CALL TO ORDER

The regular monthly meeting of the Legislative Task Force Committee was held on Friday, August 24, 2012, and called to order by Chairperson Falkenberg at 12:08 p.m. in the Board Room, Room M210, at the Downtown Milwaukee Campus of Milwaukee Area Technical College.

A. ROLL CALL:

Members Present:
Lauren Baker, Ellis Bromberg, Charles Bruders, Timothy Elverman, Janice Falkenberg, Trevor Kubatzke, Jerry Manz, Al Pinckney and Adam Stozier

Members Absent:
Archie Graham, Michael Rosen and Marwill Santiago

Guests:
Jason Bauknecht and Michael Burke

B. COMPLIANCE WITH OPEN MEETINGS LAW:

The Legislative Task Force meeting was noticed in compliance with the Wisconsin Open Meetings law.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF May 17, 2012 MEETING:

Mr. Bruders moved, and Mr. Manz seconded, that the minutes be approved. The Task Force concurred.

D. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Legislative Update:
   a. Federal:

   2013 Federal Budget
   Mr. Elverman noted that Democratic Senator Reid (Senate Majority Leader) and Republican Representative Boehner (House Speaker) have reached an agreement on a six-month Continuing Resolution (CR) which will keep the federal government operating at current levels from October 1, 2012 – March 31, 2013. As a result, Pell grants and Perkins funding should continue at the FY 2012 levels.
Stafford Loan Interest Rate
At the end of June, Congressional leaders agreed to extend the subsidy for Stafford Loans for an additional year, keeping the interest rate at 3.4%. To pay for the subsidy, beginning July 1, 2013, new borrowers will be limited in the amount of time that they can receive an in-school interest subsidy. Students will lose eligibility for the subsidy once they have reached 150% of the published length of their education program. Originally, the Democrats' Appropriations Bill for next year had used this offset to decrease the projected Pell grant shortfall. This means that the Pell grant will no longer be protected after the CR ends in 2013. Mr. Kubatze explained that the 150% rule relates to credit hours (for every credit that is earned, students may earn up to 150% of their program). He said the new rule should barely affect our students. Also, Mr. Manz spoke of the Pell grant being decreased from 18 semesters to 12 semesters.

Gainful Employment Regulations
Mr. Elverman reported that for-profit colleges succeeded in getting a Federal District Court on July 2 to gut the reporting requirements of the Department of Education's (DOE's) recently enacted gainful employment regulation. There is a concern that the DOE will be forced to re-write the regulations which will possibly equate to two-years before there is something meaningful put forward by the DOE.

b. State:

August 14 Primary Election Results
Mr. Elverman distributed a compilation of the August 14 Wisconsin Primary Election results, prepared by The Wheeler Report. He focused his discussion on the candidates in the legislative districts that are located inside the boundaries of MATC's service area. He noted that as a result of the Primary Elections, MATC will see new legislators in Senate District 6 and Assembly Districts 7, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17, 18, and 22. We will also be represented by Congressman Petri, in addition to Congresswoman Moore, Congressman Ryan, and Congressman Sensenbrenner.

2013-2015 Biennial Budget
Mr. Bauknecht distributed Governor Walker’s written instructions to agency and department heads regarding the upcoming 2013-15 biennial budget. He noted that the Governor has basically asked all agencies and departments to submit budgets maintaining their budgets at fiscal year 2012-13 adjusted base levels. WTCS is working on a budget request to be submitted to the Governor by September 17. Mr. Elverman reported that Mr. Dan Clancy (President of the WTCS) has announced his retirement in early September, and will therefore not be involved in advocating for the new budget. The three Vice Presidents who work at WTCS will temporarily take on that responsibility. Meanwhile, the WTCS has a committee working on the budget request. That committee’s recommendation will be discussed and voted on by the WTCS Board at its September 12 meeting. Dr. Burke noted that one of the items that is likely to be part of the budget request is a recommendation to increase the district capital projects limit from $1.5 million to $3 million.
per project. The increase would allow the college to realistically expand facilities as needed without district-wide referendum approval. Mr. Elverman suggested that MATC provide the Governor with suggestions of other policy items that are fiscally related but not controversial. The Governor’s staff could include those in the budget bill, thereby saving the college from having to introduce and pass separate pieces of legislation. One such item suggested by Ms. Falkenberg is the fact that MATC has to publish its minutes in the paper which equates to thousands of dollars in costs.

The Road Ahead: Restoring Wisconsin’s Workforce Development
Mr. Elverman reported that in February 2012, Governor Walker appointed Tim Sullivan as his special assistant to work with him on workforce development issues in the state. Mr. Sullivan, the former CEO of Bucyrus Erie, has been meeting with a variety of committees and people and has just issued a “White Paper” report to the Governor entitled: The Road Ahead: Restoring Wisconsin’s Workforce Development. The report makes many recommendations regarding education and workforce training in Wisconsin. It specifically makes recommendations regarding the Technical Colleges and the role they play in the state. It is expected that many of these recommendations could result in legislative initiatives from either the Governor or legislative leaders. The Task Force had a lengthy discussion regarding the implications of the issues contained in the White Paper.

Legislative Council’s Special Committee on Improving Educational Opportunities in High School
Mr. Elverman explained that when the Legislature is not in session, the Legislative Council establishes special committees to discuss issues and recommend legislation on the topics discussed. One of those committees this year is the Special Committee On Improving Educational Opportunities in High School. It is co-chaired by Sen. Luther Olsen and Rep. Paul Farrow. The Task Force discussed the meetings and the topics that have been discussed by this committee. Mr. Elverman and Mr. Bauknecht will continue to monitor the committee’s activity and report back to the Task Force. Please use the following link to access information on this committee: http://legis.wisconsin.gov/lc/committees/study/2012/HSED/index.html.

Governor’s Task Force on Minority Unemployment in Milwaukee
The Task Force also discussed a special committee that was appointed by Gov. Walker to discuss minority unemployment issues in Milwaukee. The co-chairs of this special committee are Lt. Governor Kleefisch and Rep. Elizabeth Coggs. This committee has had several meetings, with the most recent occurring on August 23 at the Buy Seasons factory in New Berlin. Ms. Baker was able to provide the Task Force with a report on the topics discussed at that meeting since she and Dr. Thornton (from MPS) had made a presentation at that meeting. She advised the Legislative Task Force to continue to monitor these meetings since legislative initiatives are likely to come from the committee when they complete their work later this year. Please use the following link to access information about this committee: http://www.wi-cwi.org/minority_tf/default.htm.
Advocacy Plan
While the college has always had a legislative advocacy plan for each new legislative session, the Task Force discussed the need to begin advocacy efforts immediately with key legislators and decision makers because of the many special committees and task forces that are meeting and recommending legislative proposals. Therefore, while the college will develop a traditional plan for legislative visits to the campus once the new legislative session begins in January, 2013, Mr. Elverman and Mr. Bauknecht will immediately work with Ms. Falkenberg, Dr. Burke, Board members and others to make sure that MATC’s concerns are heard and addressed prior to the beginning of the new legislative session. The immediate advocacy efforts will include Mr. Elverman and Mr. Bauknecht, under Dr. Burke’s direction, discussing non-controversial budget issues which could be included in the Governor’s proposed budget; working with the other technical colleges and the WTCS on the proposed budget being submitted in September; inviting Tim Sullivan to visit our campus to meet with Dr. Burke; and identifying key MATC personnel who can attend meetings of the special committees that are meeting and discussing workforce training and education issues.

Task Force Web Page Development
Ms. Falkenberg recommended that the Legislative Task Force Committee have a link on MATC’s web site so that the entire college community can be made aware of the issues that are being discussed by the Task Force, and can have access to legislative resources to help them to become advocates for the college. The web-site link would list such things as the Legislative Task Force Committee agendas and minutes, as well as legislators representing the college’s service area; key issues of concern at the federal and state level; and key legislators serving on committees of most concern to MATC. The Task Force applauded the idea and asked Ms. Falkenberg to proceed with implementation.

c. Local:

Closing of Freeway Ramps – West Allis Campus
Ms. Falkenberg advised the Task Force that she has been made aware of concerns that the state Department of Transportation (DOT) is considering eliminating some entry and exit ramps on I-94, including some that would impact students and staff attempting to reach the West Allis campus. The Task Force agreed that MATC should immediately investigate these plans with the DOT, and work with West Allis officials who are advocating to keep these access points open.

d. Tentative Meeting Dates – FY2012-13

The Task Force will meet the following dates at 4:00 p.m. in the Board Room (M210):
September 20, 2012  
October 18, 2012  
November 15, 2012  
December 13, 2012  
January 17, 2013  

February 21, 2013  
March 21, 2013  
April 11, 2013  
May 23, 2013  
June 20, 2013  

E. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Desma P. Madison

Secretary
Legislative Task Force