CALL TO ORDER

The regular monthly meeting of the Legislative Task Force Committee was held on Thursday, February 21, 2013, and called to order by Chairperson Falkenberg at 4:06 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, Jason Bauknecht, Ellis Bromberg, Charles Bruders, Timothy Elverman, Janice Falkenberg, Jerry Manz, Marwill Santiago and Adam Strozier

Members Absent:

Michael Burke, Archie Graham, Trevor Kubatzke and Michael Rosen

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 DECEMBER 13, 2012 MEETING:

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

D. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Legislative Update:

   a. Federal:

      Federal Budget and Sequestration
      The Task Force discussed strategies and plans at the college if sequestration takes place on March 1, as called for under the Budget Control Act passed by Congress in August, 2011. Mr. Elverman noted that sequestration calls for cuts in the federal 2013 budget of $85 billion, with non-defense discretionary spending absorbing $42.67 billion of those cuts. Higher education programs would face cuts from 5% to 8% for the remainder of the 2013 budget year. Ms. Baker asked if the college administration had more specific information on how the cuts would directly impact our students. J. Manz stated that the programs that are being closely watched by the student services area of the college are: student unemployment, college work-study, and SEOG. The Pell Grant is not expected to be affected by the cuts, at least for another year. He further reported that the college currently has 270 students who are no longer eligible for the Pell Grant due to recent Pell Grant rule changes, and that another 793 students will be placed on an alert list as a result of those rule changes.
ACCT Legislative Summit
M. Burke, J. Falkenberg, T. Elverman, Grace Maizonet and Cheryl Randall attended the annual ACCT Legislative Summit in Washington D.C. from February 11 to 14. In addition to attending meetings with Wisconsin Congressional members, Mr. Elverman secured meetings with officials at the Department of Education, Department of Labor, and National Science Foundation. These departments and agencies award grants to MATC, and the officials were interested in learning more about how those resources are being utilized by the college.

b. State:

2013-15 Biennial Budget
Governor Walker introduced his proposed biennial budget on February 20, and it was immediately introduced by the Joint Finance Committee as AB 40. It calls for increasing general aid to the Tech Colleges by $5 million, and for increasing the flexibility for WTCS in administering $22 million in existing worker training funds. It also calls for implementing performance-based funding for the Tech Colleges, with 10% of funding awarded on that basis in 2014. There will be public hearings held by the Joint Finance Committee, and then AB 40 will be discussed and amended by that Committee, probably in April and May. Ms. Baker voiced her concerns with how performance based funding could affect MATC’s students and resources. She noted that a large percentage of MATC’s students receive basic skills training and that could impact the state’s evaluation of the college’s performance in an unfair manner. J. Falkenberg responded by stating that she had already had a conversation with WTCS staff regarding the metrics for evaluating the Tech Colleges. It is their intention to work closely with DWD to create metrics that are fair to all the colleges, and that take note of our particular student demographics.

As part of the college’s strategy for securing necessary resources during the budget process, Dr. Burke hosted Joint Finance Committee member Rep. Pat Strachota on February 15, and is scheduled to meet with two more members of the Joint Finance Committee (Rep. John Klenke and Rep. Dale Kooyenga) on March 1 to update them on our programs and performance.

Worker Training Grants and DWD Staffing (SB 23 and AB 14)
The Governor released a second draft bill when he introduced his budget bill, and asked for that legislation to be acted on prior to the budget bill. That draft bill was then introduced as SB 23 and AB 14. These identical bills would create a workforce-training program administered by the Department of Workforce Development (DWD). DWD would award grants to public and private organizations (including the Tech Colleges) for development of workforce training programs for both new and incumbent employees. The bills would appropriate $7.5 million in both 2013-14 and 2014-15 for grants under this new program. SB 23 was approved 5-0, and 16 to 0 in the Joint Finance Committee, and is waiting for a Senate vote. AB 14 had a public hearing on February 19 and is scheduled for an Assembly vote on February 28.
Educational Approval Board (EAB) Appointments and Issues
The Task Force discussed the fact that the Wisconsin Educational Approval Board (EAB), which regulates for-profit colleges in Wisconsin, has been discussing tougher standards and accountability measures regarding for-profit colleges operating in Wisconsin. Former Congressman Steve Gunderson, now the President of the Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities, wrote and opinion piece in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel asking that any student program completion and graduate employment rate measures being discussed for the for-profit colleges also apply to all public colleges and universities in the state. Bridgepoint Education (and other for-profit colleges) have hired lobbyists to try to influence Governor Walker’s appointments to EAB, and to argue against these tougher standards. The Task Force members asked Mr. Elverman to continue to monitor the situation.

c. Local:
Milwaukee Ordinance Regarding Funding for For-Profit Colleges and Developers
The proposed ordinance introduced by Alderwoman Milele Coggs (File No. 120737), and formally supported by MATC, was before the Common Council’s Zoning, Neighborhoods & Development Committee for action on January 29. It was held for action by Alderman Michael Murphy who stated that the Committee should hear from some for-profit colleges before voting on the measure. It was then scheduled for a special meeting of the same Committee on February 5, at which time attorney Brian Randall from Friebert, Finnerty & St. John appeared before the Committee on behalf of Kaplan University. The Committee then voted to hold the ordinance “to the call of the chair”. Alderwoman Coggs is having the ordinance redrafted to address concerns raised by Alderman Murphy and the Kaplan University representative. Mr. Elverman will continue to follow and report on this issue.

Tentative Meeting Dates – FY2012-13

The Task Force will meet the following dates at 4:00 p.m. in the Board Room (M210):

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

E. ADJOURNMENT:
The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Desma P. Madison
Secretary
Legislative Task Force