Joint Legislative/Regents Relations Committee
Minutes for Thursday, September 20, 2018
9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.
The U (Student Union), Room 3145

Committee Members Present: Laura Godden, Kjerstin Lang, Jaralee Richter, Elizabeth Brown, Heather Hulett, Joe Heim, Jack Lawlis
Committee Members Absent: Drea Higgins, Sandra Vinney
Guest: Joe Gow

The convener, Laura Godden, called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

1. Review the committee’s history, responsibilities, and activities
   - Committee members introduced themselves and why they were interested in serving on this committee. This is a joint committee, which in the spirit/tradition of shared governance, includes members representing faculty, academic staff, university staff, and students. The committee ultimately reports to the chancellor. The committee’s members are welcome to share and disseminate any pertinent committee information to their governance group.
   - Past committee members reviewed the committee’s main duties and activities. Joe Heim, UWL’s Legislative Liaison and emeritus professor of political science, anchors the committee with his expertise and experience. Heim often emails information of interest to committee members. In general, the committee keeps an eye on UW System budget planning and proposals, as well as federal, state, and local legislation and other governmental issues affecting the university, its staff, and its students. It also strives to let legislators and regents know about the good work taking place at UWL of benefit to the state and its citizens. Sometimes the committee writes letters in response to, against, and/or in support of issues or legislation to lawmakers, regents, the campus, and/or the public. The committee also helps to arrange and promote events on campus involving regents and legislators. Typically, in the fall semester of election years, the committee (along with other partners) sponsors political debates on campus for several regional representative races. In the spring, it helps to organize and promote a legislative forum on campus where elected representatives are invited to UWL to discuss current issues of concern, especially those impacting the UW System, UWL, and university staff and students.

2. Discuss the committee’s charge and timeline for the upcoming year
   - The UW Board of Regents is scheduled to visit UWL on December 6th and 7th. It would be great if committee members could volunteer as guides or try to be especially visible during this event. There is a separate regents meeting planning committee on campus who does the work to reserve rooms, plan tours, coordinate volunteers, and create videos and other illustrative works to highlight UWL for the meeting. Since one of UWL’s “buddy”/liaison regents (Delgado) hasn’t visited our campus yet, this committee could reach out to him and the other UWL regent liaison (Millner) and ask if either of them would like to do anything special while they are here for the meeting, like a tour, or see if either would like to arrange for a future one-on-one visit to campus.
   - This committee will help schedule and promote political debates this fall and a legislative forum in the spring. The chancellor has requested that we try not to schedule such events on Friday afternoons (as has been done in the past) to see if that boosts attendance (and also because it makes it possible for him to attend). However, Friday afternoons are what the representatives seem to prefer for their schedules, so this might not be feasible. Committee members are encouraged to inform people in their department, office, and governance unit of the debates and forum. Lang will use last year’s template (Godden will email to her) to make posters for the debates and submit them to the electronic bulletin boards. Lang will send the posters to committee members in advance so they can print and post them and/or email them to others. Committee members are highly encouraged to attend the events if possible.
   - The committee should keep watch on anything dealing with the Wisconsin state budget starting in late February/early March as it includes the UW System. The state budget runs on a two-year
(biennial) cycle and is typically proposed by the governor in the spring (of odd-numbered years), so this is when information about the budget generally starts getting released. From there, the governor’s proposal goes onto the state legislature’s Joint Finance Committee (which is made up of legislators appointed by leaders in both houses of the legislature). This committee holds hearings on the budget around the state that citizens can attend and give input. Heim typically attends these hearings in April and May. The committee’s version of the budget then moves on to the full assembly and senate where more debate and changes happen. After both houses pass their version of the budget, if they are different, another committee (consisting of members from both houses) forms to work out the differences. The reconciliation version of the budget then gets voted on by both houses. After it is approved by both houses, it then goes to the governor. The ideal is to finalize the budget by July 1, which is the start of the fiscal year, but that doesn’t always happen. Last year, it took until October. This committee and its members can advocate for UWL budget and borrowing requests (as well as more flexibility in borrowing) when appropriate. Some current UWL needs are HVAC updates in Main Hall, a new residence hall, phase II of the Prairie Springs building, and a field house.

- Since it is an election year, candidates running for office will likely hold events on campus and in the community. Committee members can attend these events and ask questions related to UWL or encourage others to do so. They can also work to educate others on campus and community about budget, legislative, and regent issues and workings. Committee members should also be aware that even matters at the local government level can effect UWL. For example, the city is planning to start charging for street parking around campus. Additionally, they can help prevent inaccuracies from further circulating. For example, a current rumor is that the field house is being forced on students, even though evidence (referendum and positive student views) shows significant student support. Committee members can also keep abreast with UW System committees like the general education planning committee and advocate for what is best for UWL when appropriate.

3. Elect a committee chair
   - M/S/P to elect Kjerstin Lang and Elizabeth Brown co-chairs of the UWL Joint Legislative/Regents Relations Committee for the 2018-2019 academic year.

4. Approve the minutes of the previous year’s meetings on September 26, 2017, and January 30, 2018
   - M/S/P to approve the minutes from September 26, 2017.
   - M/S/P to approve the minutes from January 30, 2018.

5. Plan/schedule the next meeting
   - Elizabeth Brown will send out a Doodle Poll to determine the best time for the next meeting which is to be scheduled sometime in advance of the campus political debates in order to plan/approve promotional material and actions. The committee will also talk more about volunteer opportunities at the December Board of Regents meeting at UWL, as well as ways to reach out to UWL’s Regent Liaisons.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:12 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura M. Godden
October 31, 2018

Approved November 13, 2018.