

Student Access Hearing
July 17, 2018
Notes

Present: Andrikk Frazier, Chair; Allison Barlow, and Byron Shinn

I. Call to Order

Mr. Frazier called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

II. New Business – Action Items

There was a motion to accept the minutes from the June 13th meeting. Motion passed.

III. New Business – Information Items

a. Introduction and Context

Chair Frazier provided an overview of the purpose of the meeting, agenda, public comment process and opportunities for input and feedback online. He also provided an overview of the first hearing held at USFSP. While the subcommittee will be hearing from/at each of the campuses, the goal is for the Task Force to make recommendations for “one” USF.

Dr. Holbrook welcomed the subcommittee, staff, students and community members.

b. Testimony

i. SACS guidelines related to student access.

Dr. Marvin Moore, USF Director of Institutional Effectiveness, provided an overview of the accreditation guidelines that relate to student access. Mission of SACS is to enhance the quality of higher education by ensuring institutions meet standards established by the higher education community (self-regulating body by members). SACS places a high priority on institutional autonomy to serve their community within certain guidelines.

There was discussion as to what they should be mindful of in terms of advertising and recruiting considering consolidation as it relates to SACS and how to incorporate the unique identity of the campus while maintaining consistency in advertising. Dr. Moore noted that the advertising rules came about in response to private entities, but the rules must apply to all. He said the focus should be on consistency in advertising and that SACS will focus on specific program requirements as advertised.

ii. Implication of moving to a single admissions criteria on student access.

Andy Telatovich, USFSM Director of Admissions, provided an overview of the streamlined process for the admission function at USF. Students may now select more than one campus on the application through a preference list. Application dates and deadlines will all be the same and will communicate that in a consistent manner. The admissions grid will be shared and the admissions staff will focus on highlighting early acceptance.

Mr. Telatovich provided some projections for USFSM using current student admits while applying the single admissions standards. Mr. Telatovich noted that the projected ethnic diversity would stay consistent for admitted students. It will be important to stress the importance of early acceptance and provide additional work and assistance to applicants.

Serge Desir, USFSP Director of Admissions, reviewed similar projections at USFSP. He said that USFSP's Fall FTICs would have only minor changes to cohort representation by ethnicity/race: a moderate reduction for Black and Hispanic admits in Summer cohort; and a stable fall cohort ethnic/racial representation for all categories.

USFSP has traditionally had a less stringent profile for summer admits, which directly affects their projections and results in some higher decreases. Admits for fall have slight reductions in overall admits but ethnicity remains very similar to current numbers. Admissions will have to be more proactive in outreach and communications for early application along with enhanced follow-up.

Mr. Telatovich explained the areas that they foresee additional focus will be required including communication, marketing, yielding and Summer Bridge Programs. This includes an improved focus on differentiating between term of entry and the benefits of starting at a different entry. A student is notified on their admission letter of what term they will enter, with a rolling admissions beginning October 1.

Mr. Desir noted that more attention will be paid to the benefits of alternative term of entry as well as a broad array of what is considered competitive throughout the term of entry lifetime (not just fall). He explained their partnerships with local high schools tailored to local schools' needs and increased. There can be different forms of access depending on their particular situations.

Mr. Desir suggested outreach offices at the regional campuses that could be community and development driven. Other recommendations include expanded alternative entries like FUSE, specialized educational partnerships and Summer Bridge Program acceleration and exploring multiple Summer Bridge Program options including career focus and otherwise.

There was additional information requested on a single scholarship grid along with implications.

iii. Measuring diversity.

Cecil Howard, USF Chief Diversity Officer, provided an overview of USF's commitment to diversity – “committed to maintaining a diverse student body.” The challenge is measuring diversity – it is not just quantitative but an overall qualitative community. Mr. Howard reviewed an undergraduate headcount for the last 4 years.

USF will continue to look at processes to continue to attract students to the university through Student Support Services, College Reach Out Program and Upward Bound.

There was discussion regarding limitations on diversity goals. Mr. Howard confirmed that USF cannot engage with goals based on race or gender or make decisions based on those factors. As long as USF continues to engage in outreach activities that are focused on certain demographics, diversity will organically increase.

iv. Best practices for informing and preparing first time in college (FTIC) and first generation applicants.

Laurie Meggesin, Executive Director of the Florida College Access Network, provided an overview of ways to support students at a younger age and reach college.

She said that low income Florida high school graduates enroll in college at much lower rates than their non-low income peers, and face higher obstacles in persisting and completing their degrees. But the research show us that when students get the information they need early—where their community and schools build a college-going culture to support them—they are much more likely to thrive academically and aspire to a degree beyond high school.

Affording college—and the perception that college is financially out of reach—is one of the biggest barriers that USF can help such students overcome. One of the top predictors of whether students enroll in college is whether they complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which qualifies students for Pell grants and other forms of need-based aid. FAFSA rates tend to be much lower at high schools with higher proportions of low income students compared to their non-low-income peers. Reasons include lack of information, misinformation, intimidation, and the perception that college is out of reach for them and their

families. According to a recent survey commissioned by the Helios Education Foundation, only 32% of Floridians believe that college education is affordable to them and their families, and only 19% believe it's affordable for all Floridians. Not only that, but when asked about the biggest barrier facing today's college students, the top answer by a landslide was student debt.

So, although tuition in Florida is among the lowest in the country, Floridians see the cost of college as a significant barrier. Students who don't have adults in their families who have been to college are also at a disadvantage with the college-going process, such as choosing a school and degree program that's a good fit for their interests, understanding the value of a degree in the workforce, and navigating college applications and financial aid.

Although school counselors do their best to support students, at a ratio of over 400 to one, they can't provide the level of support students need without community help.

There are many ways in which community partners like USF can help:

- Continue to participate in local college access networks, including LEAP in Tampa Bay, Reach Manatee, the Talent4Tomorrow Partnership in Sarasota, and Polk Vision.
- Foster education ecosystems.
- Host more campus visits.
- Participate in efforts that help students explore their interests and career options, and learn of the multiple education pathways available, like FUSE.
- Last-dollar promise scholarship programs are also a strong access tool.
- Consider adopting more evidence-based scholarship models that help low income students persist and complete their degrees.
- Support schools participating in FCAN's College Ready Florida series of initiatives, which currently about half the high schools in Florida.

Ms. Meggesin recommended that overall, USF should continue to develop deepened community partnership with schools and organization serving our high needs students. Another potential recommendation is to get the resources to the schools, during the school day to avoid costs and transportation.

Additional information was requested regarding FAFSA completion numbers for Hillsborough, Manatee, Sarasota and Polk counties from the subcommittee members.

Luz Corcuera provided an overview of UnidosNow, which serves both Sarasota and Manatee counties and is a member of both LCAFs. UnidosNow works to empower Latinos to achieve their American dream with a focus early in the student's life to have a higher impact. UnidosNow partners with USFSM to provide a leadership program to prepare students for college. It is multi-generational work and it requires family involvement for success.

She provided some recommendations for engaging Latinos:

- Invite Latinos for a college night.
- Create a culture of inclusivity – programs to practice English prior to college.
- Special FUSE programs for Latinos
- Create events that include Latino families
- Scholarships for Spanish speakers/ Latinos
- Hiring practices need to include bilingual and bicultural staff.

There was discussion on SAT prep and how that is handled at USFSM. UnidosNow incorporates it into their Future Leaders program, but USFSM also partners to provide this service once a semester on campus in person.

v. Technology’s role in breaking barriers to access.

Dr. Cynthia DeLuca, Associate Vice President for Innovative Education, provided an overview of USF Online Education. The USF System allows flexibility in taking courses online or in person. Regional campuses presented overviews of innovative education on both campuses showing highlights of various actual examples of different technologies and platforms. Faculty engagement and experiential learning are strong methods to keep students at the institution and persisting. Student engagement can be strengthened through quality online courses and platforms.

Dr. DeLuca outlined some challenges with technology and there was discussion about WebEx between campuses. Dr. DeLuca noted that the platform does not exist now, but with consolidation the entire system could take advantage of this kind of opportunity.

c. Public Comment

Evan Freuhauf, SGA Vice President at USFSM, provided several comments and suggestions regarding student access including:

- USFSM has a varied student population.
- Increased flexibility of class schedule and additional investment in our classroom space including the STEM building to support student success and retention.
- Increased outreach for student opportunities beyond admissions.
- Financial Accessibility. Currently, there is a low cost attendance at USFSM and consolidation could impact this.
- Traditional vs. nontraditional student. FUSE, Summer Beginning Program and dual enrollment are important to continue to build.

Greg McDaniel spoke, representing Gamma Xi Boule, the local chapter of Sigma Pi Phi fraternity, which is the oldest male black fraternity in the world. He noted that after hearing information at the hearing, he is impressed with the efforts that the Task Force is putting forward to make consolidation successful for everyone. Mr. McDaniel explained that Gamma Xi Boule prepares local youth for college, the ultimate goal should be to keep them in our community. The lack of housing at USFSM is an issue for the full

campus experience, but consolidation could provide that opportunity to be a part of the entire campus environment.

Laura Roberts - College and career advisor at Bayshore High School shared top barriers to access. Better preparedness at elementary and middle schools, including parents, about advanced courses (AP, dual enrollment), especially for the traditionally underrepresented student. The increase in academic profile is a concern and FAFSA completion is a challenge for many families along with ACT/SAT prep. Ms. Roberts recommended community sessions inviting families onto campus. Summer Bridge is so important to acclimate students to college courses and community.

Mark Huey, president of Sarasota Economic Development Corporation, highlighted that USFSM, as a regional research university, is an economic driver locally. USF Consolidation provides an opportunity for alignment and participation on the diversification of our economy locally. Four things play into that role and where USF could step up:

1. Attitude and culture. Provide thought leadership in the challenge of diversifying the economy.
2. Agility. USF has responded to community needs and align curriculum with business needs.
3. Innovation disciplines. Excited about the STEM building, need more engineering and computer science to drive innovation in business.
4. Conviction to connect to business with innovation assets (all of them – students, faculty, etc.).

Bart Stucker, coordinator of Orientation for USFSM, questioned regarding access and why do our students choose USFSM. He wanted to know if the members have access to data that shows why students choose one or the other and if they are using that to drive recommendations.

d. Open Discussion

Members noted that there was a lot of information provided and that there are great relationships between the campuses and the communities but there are clearly areas for improvement. Technology will be a large piece of moving forward in consolidation using various platforms and methods. Helios will be joining the next meeting to discuss ways to connect with kids at the middle school level.

Concerns were raised regarding the flexibility and agility to change programs and the scholarship grid as financial aid will be an important key to access. Additional information regarding financial aid focused on diversity was requested and ways in which the Task Force could help. She raised the question about how resources will be spread throughout the System. The members also noted they would like to look at FAFSA completion, as well as additional information and focus on transfer students – not just FTIC.

Finally, the members noted that access will affect all walks of life in the region and there is an opportunity to break down barriers that separate accreditation has created.

III. Adjournment

With no other discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 4:44 p.m.