

Proposed Agenda for BOR Retreat

1. FY 2015 Operating and Capital Budgets.

This is a topic normally discussed at the Fall Retreat. The Board would be briefed on the status of budget planning for FY 2015 to date and the broad themes that, with BOR endorsement, would be pursued in the FY 2015 budget development. Another topic of discussion would be maximizing opportunities for capital budget funding, given recent increases in gaming revenues, some of which are targeted to higher education capital projects.

2. IT.

This session would include the positive “disruptive” potential of IT on both the academic and administrative operations in higher education. On the academic side, there is the highly interactive online education as well as the power of “big data,” learning analytics and adaptive learning that can significantly increase college completion rates. This is a rapidly changing area. On the administrative side, there is the potential for “cloud computing” to dramatically lower the costs of IT services in administration.

3. Enrollment management and financial aid.

Staff have done considerable work on enrollment trends, enrollment management and financial aid allocations based on changing demographics in the state and nation. A surprising trend is that enrollment has fallen at a number of universities across the country, including the two-year sector. In Maryland, Anne Arundel Community College has seen a 25% drop in enrollment and St. Mary’s College experienced a 33% drop in its fall freshman class. At the same time, there is huge churn in enrollment patterns. At present, 60% of students currently attending USM institutions began their higher education at some other institution than where they are currently enrolled. Central to our ability to improve graduation rates and meet our college completion goals is serve these students better through streamlining the transfer of credits earned and the strategic use of financial aid. Presently, campuses allocate financial based on the old model where students by and large came to one institution and stayed there until they graduated. Aid tends to be “front loaded” and disproportionately given to freshman, so there is less aid to help transfer students and needy students as they progress toward their degrees. Too many end up dropping out before completing the degree. This could be a fruitful and meaning area of discussion with the Board to explore new ideas and to adjust to changing patterns in higher education enrollment and college completion.

4. Open meetings act training.

It is important that the BOR be trained on appropriate requirements of the Open Meeting Act and the retreat would provide a convenient forum for that training.