

MINUTES – SAAA Committee Meeting

Wednesday, March 29, 2017

Hillman 272

1. INTRODUCTIONS

Dr. Taboas called the meeting to order at ~3:35 PM. Dr. Taboas noted that there are two main agenda items, Veterans Affairs and Economic Mobility.

2. Veterans Affairs

Dr. Taboas introduced Mr. Edwin Hernandez, Director Veterans Services, Pitt Office of Veterans Services. Mr. Hernandez has been in this position for 8-months. Mr. Hernandez's overall mission is to help Pitt student veterans transform from military life to student life, e.g., help get the veteran students established in university culture. He is accomplishing this mission by building networks, both on-campus and off-campus. Mr. Hernandez is striving to build momentum and raise awareness across the entire Pitt campus, RE: Pitt student veterans.

Pitt student veterans are non-traditional students; they are 24 – 40 years old, often with families and other responsibilities.

The Office of Veteran Services has 4-staff members and falls under the College of General Studies. The office offers programming to best assist the veteran students. The office also assists the students in obtaining their veterans' benefits.

Mr. Hernandez estimates that there are ~400 Pitt student veterans on the Oakland campus and ~600 Pitt student veterans when the regional Pitt campuses are included. Perhaps better "counting" will occur in concert with OAFSA which is inquiring regarding the veteran status of admitted students.

Mr. Hernandez noted that the problems/challenges veterans face nationwide are also faced by Pitt veteran students, e.g., homelessness. Local veteran counselors are available to meet with Pitt student veterans.

One network Mr. Hernandez is working to build is a network of military affiliated alumni. To date, 2500 such alumni have been identified. These alumni can potentially assist Pitt student veterans vis-à-vis fundraising and with employment opportunities.

One off-campus network that Mr. Hernandez is working to build is the Western PA. Veterans Academic Alliance. This alliance is comprised of Pitt plus 18 additional local academic institutions (including Penn State and WVU). The goal of this alliance is to develop and share "best practices" to best support student veterans and help build a bigger/stronger support network.

Mr. Hernandez intends to reach out to all schools, units, etc. on campus to learn what military related programming is ongoing that could be worthwhile for the Pitt student

veterans. It might also be worthwhile for Mr. Hernandez to present to the Council of Deans at some point.

3. Economic Mobility

Dr. Taboas summarized the progress in determining the University's success in improving student income mobility. This issue was brought up as a potential focus point for the SAAA committee by Lance Davidson on 2-8-17. It is a significant issue because the prospect of children earning more than their parents has fallen from 90% to less than 50% over the past half century. The summary was that available financial outcomes data at the University does not follow graduates for a sufficient length of time (to age 34-35), and that coordination is needed between different offices to compile this and enrollment data. The committee was very helpful with suggestions on knowledgeable staff and on how to compile this data.

The report included a slide presentation (to be sent with minutes) on economic mobility rankings of universities and what information is publically available at the University of Pittsburgh on the matter. Economic mobility was defined as the ability of an individual, family or other group to improve their economic status, usually measured in income (pay, savings, and assets). Per the "Economic Mobility Project", the average college in the USA has an average upward mobility rate of 1.9% (1996-2004 incomes from graduates 1980-1982). This number is a product of "access" and "success rate" with access defined as the % of children attending a school whose parents are in the lower quintile of income, and success rate defined as the % of children at that school who moved in income from the lower quintile (parents income) to the upper quintile. Thus the "upward mobility rate" is a normalized measure that adjusts a school's "success rate" by the amount of students they accept in the lower quintile of family income. For profit colleges have a slightly higher "mobility rate" = 2.41% compared to public colleges (1.93%) and private non-profit colleges (1.87%). High ranking schools were Cal State U (LA), Pace U (NY), and SUNY Stony Brook (NY). T

The difference in "access" between colleges (e.g. Ivy vs public colleges) was discussed. Regarding the national average "success rate", data was presented showing that the rate is constant across parental income except for the tails incomes, where children from the lowest income families fair worse than the average rate while children from the highest income families fair better than the average rate in improving their income. College attendance greatly increased the "success rate". To put this in perspective, actual incomes were presented and it was noted that 50% of all graduates (1980 birth cohort) make \$28,000 or less by age 34.

Subsequently, the University of Pittsburgh's Gallup Poll Reports were summarized as an available starting point to determine income outcomes. These were commissioned to evaluate alumni about their experience as university graduates and about their work place. They included income as part of job satisfaction questions. In general, Pitt alumni score high on employment, income, and pursuing further education than their AAU (American Association of Universities) counterparts. However specific income information was unavailable. The presentation was summarized with four areas of focus

to improve mobility: 1) Increase “access” (admissions, affordability), 2) increase liaisons with elite employers, 3) capitalize on alumni network, 4) continue enhancing Pitt’s education quality / school reputation.

4. There being no additional discussion, Dr. Taboas concluded the meeting at ~4:30 PM. Our Committee will next meet on April 12, 3:30 PM – 4:30 PM, Hillman 272.

Respectfully Submitted,

Harvey Borovetz