

EDUCATIONAL APPROVAL BOARD

MEETING OF July 6, 1999

131 West Wilson Street, 3rd Floor
Madison, WI 53703

Ray Boland, Chair of the Educational Approval Board, called the meeting to order at 9:20 A.M.

Members Present:

Ray Boland, Tracy Bredeson for Jon Litscher, Georgiana Giese, Delora Newton.

Absent: Rick Berg, Leroy Conner, Gene Kussart.

Others Present:

David Dies (Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities), Jim Falco (National Louis University), Don Madelung (Herzing College), Linda Heidtman, Joan Fitzgerald, Nina Tallard, Yvonne Hagen, Amy Lorimer, Joe Davis (EAB staff).

Mr. Boland referred the members to the Minutes. Ms Giese noted that her name was misspelled. Ms, Newton moved and Ms. Bredeson seconded a motion to approve the Minutes. The motion carried.

Ensuring Access Paper

Mr. Boland said that he had already talked with Mr., Kussart about the issues raised in this paper. The latter had some concerns about the intent of the paper and how the issues raised related to the Department of Workforce Development [DWD]. He especially referred to instances of W2 providers not approved by the EAB and to what extent proprietary schools have participated in W2.

Mr. Davis explained that the issue was brought to the board by approved schools, as the paper noted. The paper was intended to stimulate a policy discussion by the board regarding whether it felt it had a role to play in questions of access for the schools it oversees.

Mr. Boland said that there seemed to be at least two related issues at play: 1) to what extent there have been W2 providers who ought to have been approved by the EAB, and 2) whether EAB-approved schools had appropriate access to W2. Mr. Boland asked if the schools had any objection to private employers working with W2 participants.

Mr. Davis noted that the broader issue rightly belonged as a policy and administrative matter for DWD – the paper tried to deal only with whether EAB-approved schools ‘got a fair shake’ in offering their services. Mr. Davis said that the concern did not really relate to private employers. He said that some schools were concerned about training entities which they felt ought to have, but did not, secure approval from the EAB. He added that

the paper was intended to focus on a more circumscribed part of the overall issue; to what extent EAB-approved schools had competitive access to the W2 delivery system.

Mr. Boland said that Mr. Kussart needed to know more of the details of the situation in order for DWD to be able to analyze it and determine what, if any action, might be required.

Ms. Newton said that her sense of W2 was that participants tended to be served, mainly, by what she characterized as social service agencies that did not really operate like schools *per se*. She added that W2 providers are overseen by DWD, and by the federal government, and she was not exercised about the need for additional oversight. She thought that it was appropriate for the EAB to raise the subject for DWD's attention and supported bullet #1 of the findings: that a dialogue be initiated with Mr. Kussart, in his role as Special Assistant to the Governor for Workforce Issues.

Mr. Boland noted that there was another issue to consider: the extent to which W2 participants could receive education and training.

Ms. Newton mentioned that the Conference Committee working on the biennial budget had prepared a provision making it easier for W2 participants to enroll in training.

David Dies provided the particulars of proposal: reducing the number of hours to meet the W2 work requirement to 25 and permitting participants to enroll in the Technical College System; with an attempt to allow the substitution of some education/training for work hours.

Mr. Boland noted that this had been a debate since the early days of W2 – i.e., how to balance work requirements with the need for skills training. He said that if there were some thought, now to provide for training in lieu of work that shorter-term proprietary schools might be more appropriate than the public technical colleges. This, he said, brought the discussion full circle back to the question of recognizing a place in public training programs for EAB-approved schools.

Mr. Boland suggested that he, as board chair, send a letter to Mr. Kussart suggesting a meeting to explain and discuss the issues raised in the Ensuring Access paper. The meeting ought to have an agenda and flesh out the issues raised during this meeting and raised in the paper. Mr. Davis was directed to draft the letter to Mr. Kussart.

Computer Policy

Mr. Davis stated that the revised computer policy grew out of discussion at the last meeting. He pointed out that the revised policy emanated from a meeting the EAB held with its computer schools.

Ms. Fitzgerald summarized the paper. She discussed bringing all the schools together and noted that some had been approved since 1991 and some were just on the verge of approval. She added that the proposed policy came out of the group discussion. Ms. Fitzgerald handed out the current (9/94) Computer Policy and identified the changes proposed for the current Policy.

Ms. Bredeson stated that she liked the new policy.

Mr. Davis used the meeting with the computer schools to comment on the difference between the way the EAB deals with schools and does business today and how it operated only a few years ago. He mentioned the new desire to partner and work with schools and noted that having schools work on and agree to the policy overseeing them was a marked change from even a few short years ago when the schools and the EAB were locked in an adversarial relationship.

Mr. Boland called for a motion. Ms. Giese moved and Ms. Bredeson seconded a motion to approve the new Computer Policy. The motion carried.

Distance Education

Mr. Davis explained that the purpose of the paper was to explain developments in the fast-moving Distance Education field; to keep the board as informed as possible about how the EAB is trying to maintain some semblance of control. He summarized the paper and explained how the EAB was dealing with each of the cases identified. The EAB's goal, he said, is to be consistent with current policy and ensure that Wisconsin is kept free of unsavory operators.

Mr. Davis then summarized a number of recent developments in Distance Education to give the board even more of a flavor of the volume of activity in this arena. He discussed the proliferation of new marketing ventures; referred to increasing national attention to the threat of Diploma Mills; explained how the EAB dealt with Concord University Law School (an on-line Law School) and, in general, said that the field of Distance Education was booming. He noted that the EAB tries to use state resources efficiently and does not pursue Distance Education providers in all cases; if a school only serves a very small number of students it is not in the best interests of the state to be overly aggressive.

Ms. Bredeson asked how effectively the EAB was able to keep track of developments in Distance Education, let alone all the providers.

Mr. Davis noted that Distance Education providers rely on aggressive marketing, so the EAB, more often than not, is able to learn of new ventures and then communicates Wisconsin law, policy and procedures toward the end of securing approval. He added, though, that it is getting more and more difficult and that staff is barely keeping on top of the situation. Wisconsin is fortunate in having a solid and aggressive regulatory reputation which discourages certain operators from even trying to set up shop. But, out to the future the problem figures to become harder to manage.

Mr. Davis reported that on August 4th the EAB was having the Executive Director of the Distance Education and Training Council [DETC] come to Wisconsin. Representatives from the UW, Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, the Department of Workforce Development and others had been invited – the purpose of the meeting is to see how the EAB and Wisconsin can work with the DETC in policing Distance Education.

GI Bill Pilot

Mr. Davis noted that he had reported on the status of EAB's GI Bill Pilot to United States Department of Veterans Affairs Undersecretary Thompson and that the latter had

commended Wisconsin's efforts. Mr. Davis then asked Nina Tallard to relate her experiences in dealing with schools in her capacity as an Educational Specialist working on the GI Bill.

Ms. Tallard reported that the entire manner of working with schools had changed; that she had gone from an auditor role, looking to catch schools in mistakes, to a collegial and interactive professional working with schools to improve their systems for serving veterans. She explained that when she visited schools she no longer just met with just a certifying official (i.e., the designated individual who signs veterans reimbursement forms). She now met with individuals from throughout the school – the effect is that the EAB pilot is stimulating the development of systems for serving veterans at schools.

Executive Secretary's Report

Mr. Davis mentioned a few developments of interest to the board. He

- reported that Concord University Law School (an on-line provider to which the board's attention was drawn in a memo) had advertised in the *Wisconsin State Journal*. The EAB contacted the school and the advertisement was pulled.
- handed out a position paper on the EAB's potential role in registering training providers for the new Workforce Investment Act – EAB is participating on a DWD work group.
- noted that Wisconsin State University, Ltd. (an Internet school which the EAB ran out of Wisconsin last year) was indicted by the State of Maine.
- highlighted an excellent new program submittal by National Louis University and noted, in general, that the out-of-state colleges were providing solid programming.
- reported that the Sallie Mae Corporation (a quasi-public loan agency) was venturing, quite aggressively, into the Internet and proprietary sectors; offering loans to studnets which promised to have a long-term affect on the EAB's schools.

Mr. Davis then mentioned that the EAB was holding its first ever All Schools Conference on November 9th – planning is in the initial stages and further information will be forthcoming.

Ms. Newton asked if Mr. Davis had heard of a 4-year college, or other training entity, offering training and instruction for the Wisconsin Indian gaming industry. He had not heard of it, but agreed to do some follow-up.

Mr. Boland told the members that he wanted to take a few minutes to talk about the state of the state of the Educational Approval Board. He talked about wearing two hats simultaneously; as the Chair of the EAB and also as the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs [DVA].

He talked about the very expansive role, the broad statutory latitude, of the DVA as it relates to veterans issues, covering education, training, job placement; in short all issues concerned with transitioning veterans to successful civilian life. While the DVA has that

broad authority, it has not, he said, fully implemented it. For the past few years, though, his mission at the DVA has been to consolidate the disjointed and uncoordinated program pieces that are in various places in state government. This overall concern was in touch with the current mood in Congress, responding to recommendations of a congressional task force on transitioning issues facing veterans. He, for instance, mentioned a recommendation forwarded to Congress to shift job placement and training for veterans from the Department of labor to the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. Boland then noted that as board chair he was also vitally concerned with the question of appropriate proprietary school management; and, added that at times this subject and veterans education coincided. He said that the board needed to become concerned from a corporate perspective about the big issues facing the EAB.

Mr. Boland proposed that the next two years be a period of transition, of planning – to prepare a new game plan for the future so that Wisconsin can be positioned to meet the challenges ahead. He suggested that this would involve an analysis of the issues facing the EAB and include specific proposals, staffing implications – in short, development of a proposal regarding the kind of capacity EAB needs for the future.

He noted there is almost uniformity in how states organize their GI Bill and proprietary /private school oversight roles; other than in those states where there is a higher education authority; a department of education. He noted that there was an attempt four years ago to create such an over-arching agency and he said that he now more fully appreciates the need for such a body. In talking about the big picture, he stated that the GI Bill ought to be more fully integrated into WDVA, but that this proposal in the current budget had left the state oversight to the Higher Educational Aids Board. He thought that was not an appropriate location; because HEAB was not an educational approval entity.

As the budget currently stands, the EAB will stay organized as it is, but its administrative connection will shift to the WDVA. The next two years should be spent ensuring that Wisconsin remains a national leader in this area. Mr. Boland also pledged that WDVA staff would work to provide all necessary support and assistance to the EAB.

Ms. Newton reacted positively to the ideas presented and thought that the EAB was a better fit with WDVA, for administrative connection, than HEAB.

Mr. Davis noted that in the informal interchanges which EAB staff has already had with WDVA staff the level of professionalism and responsiveness has been superb. Ms. Heidtman remarked that even though there was no formal relationship WDVA staff with whom she had worked had been most forthcoming in providing information and support and even pledged to get information quickly if they needed to.

Mr. Boland then suggested that given the month lag in the previous meetings that the board should look at October, January and April as a future meeting schedule. The favored October date is in the first week and EAB staff will contact members with two alternatives.

Ms. Bredeson moved and Ms. Newton seconded a call for adjournment that carried. The meeting ended at 10:45 A.M.