

EDUCATIONAL APPROVAL BOARD

Meeting of October 23, 2000

30 W. Mifflin St., 8th Floor
Madison, WI 53703

Ray Boland, Chair of the Educational Approval Board, called the meeting to order.

Members Present:

Ray Boland, John Brueggemann for Jon Litscher, Gene Kussart

Absent: Georgiana Giese, Rick Berg, Leroy Conner, Delora Newton

Others Present:

Jim Falco (National Louis University), Arlene McDuffie (MBTI), Tammy Herman (MBTI), Lloyd Levin (Robbins & Lloyd), Scott Hillstrom and Jill Holdman (Tech skills.com), Linda Haines (Upper Iowa University), Sharon Ruegg and Jon Nybakke (New Horizons).

Mr. Boland, owing to the sparse attendance, convened an Executive Committee meeting. He referred members to the Minutes that were approved as written.

Presentation

Arlene McDuffie (MBTI) gave an overview of MBTI: located in downtown Milwaukee the school serves 250 students in six programs – 95% of the students have tried school elsewhere. The emphasis at MBTI is on having students finish school. Ms. McDuffie pointed out that many of the students are living on the edge – many of them are students that no one else wants and without the chance to get some training they would be relegated to unemployment and poverty. MBTI has really become the ‘only game in town’ – the only place willing to take a chance with individuals who have the cards stacked against them. Despite the challenges, there is a high success rate: the school has a 66% retention rate for students and an 82% job placement rate for completers. Ms. McDuffie emphasized the importance of ‘soft skills’ – of teaching things that other schools take for granted.

Mr. Kussart asked about the retention rate.

Ms. McDuffie responded that it was 66%.

Mr. Kussart then asked about entrance requirements.

Ms. McDuffie stated that a high school degree and is required along with entrance exams.

Mr. Kussart asked how the school attracted instructors.

Ms. McDuffie said that MBTI advertises in the newspaper and other resources. All the instructors have degrees and there is a heavy emphasis on real world experience. She explained that the curriculum is job focused and the goal of the school is to get its graduates into entry-level employment.

Mr. Boland expressed his appreciation for the work that Ms. McDuffie and the school are doing. He mentioned his experience with homeless veterans and said that it is challenging to work with at-risk populations.

Real Estate Schools:

Mr. Davis explained the exemption under which certain Real Estate schools had been operating and a recent change to this status. The EAB consulted the Department of Justice that preliminarily held that Real Estate firms using the Wisconsin Realtors Association's video-based program are subject to EAB oversight. If the WRA offered its program to students, directly, it would come under the non-profit exemption – individual real estate entities, operating as schools, must be treated as schools regardless of the source of their actual programs. The EAB has acted accordingly and will initiate approval procedures pending formal notification to the WRA.

Mr. Boland asked about the position of the Department of Regulation & Licensing.

Mr. Davis said that Clete Hansen had been informed of the EAB's pending action and understood the reasons.

High stakes Test:

Joe Davis explained the reason for recommending policy phasing in a High School graduation test as an admission criterion for the entry of Wisconsin residents into EAB-approved colleges. He pointed out that Wisconsin seems on a path of formalize some K-12 standards, including a capstone exam. The EAB should go on record embracing that change.

Mr. Kussart asked if there is an opt out provision.

Mr. Davis said that there was, but that this should not affect entry into a given school.

Mr. Boland said that he'd like the wording of the University of Wisconsin's policy regarding this subject and defer action until there is a quorum of the board.

Mr. Kussart also wanted to see the policy of the Technical College System.

Distance Education:

Mr. Davis outlined an enforcement approach that the EAB could take to hold distance education providers to Wisconsin standards and recommended that the board secure comprehensive state support, supra-system standards and additional resources, to undertake a comprehensive Distance Education oversight initiative.

Mr. Boland did not think that the proposal required action at this time.

Mr. Lloyd Levin addressed the board and emphasized that distance education is proliferating. He did not think that the EAB was large or strong enough to deal with the growing sector and argued that it should emphasize two aspects of distance education quality: interactivity and mastery of subject matter.

Executive Secretary's Report:

Mr. Davis stated that the EAB has been trying to maintain standards for the sort of programs that can be approved to train veterans under the GI Bill. Federal regulations really focus on veterans' being in a discrete program that leads to a definite goal. This has come into conflict with a growing drive for consumer flexibility on the part of the postsecondary education – to clear up matters, we have set some standards and defined when a program needs to be approved. We will be bringing this subject to the board at a future meeting.

Mr. Davis reminded the members that the 2nd Annual EAB Conference is scheduled for November 14th.

Mr. Boland talked about a number of Administration initiatives dealing with workforce. He thought that postsecondary education reform and some alternatives for organizational design were being discussed, but there is nothing concrete yet. He has had discussions with key decision-makers, including the Governor's Chief of Staff. Mr. Boland emphasized that there has been an appreciation that something needs to be done in this area, but the specific design is up in the air.

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 A.M.