1. ACTION ITEMS

A. The minutes of the December 2, 2009 Academic Affairs Committee meeting were approved on a motion by Trustee Motley and seconded by Trustee Eberhard-Asch.

B. The minutes of the December 1, 2009 Student Life Committee meeting were approved on a motion by Trustee Motley and seconded by Trustee Gagne.

C. Honorary Degrees
   - Provost Williams presented Southern Connecticut State University’s proposal to award an Honorary Degree at the university’s graduate commencement ceremony on May 27, 2010.
     The Committee unanimously approved the proposal on a motion by Trustee Eberhard-Asch and a second by Trustee Motley.
   - Provost Rinker presented Western Connecticut State University’s proposal to award an Honorary Degree at the university’s commencement ceremony on May 23, 2010.
     The Committee unanimously approved the proposal on a motion by Trustee Motley and a second by Trustee Wetmore.
2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Textbook Cost Containment

Dr. Feroe indicated that the agenda called for a discussion regarding possible approaches to containment of textbook costs and it was her hope that upon conclusion of the discussion, the Committee would agree upon the necessary first steps to move forward in the formalization of a strategy for implementation of cost containment. A robust discussion ensued, with the following remarks being offered.

- Trustee Motley stated that every effort must be made to lower the costs for students, whether that includes cost consideration in the area of textbooks or any matter where the fiscal impact to students could be reduced.
- Trustee Rodriguez spoke at length about the issue of accessibility and the negative impact the increasing cost of textbooks places on accessibility to the students. He asserted that in addition to considering the content and quality of textbooks, the cost and the impact of that cost to students needs to be factored in by faculty as part of their criteria when selecting textbooks. Trustee Rodriguez extended his comments by noting that faculty should also consider costs when determining an updated edition of a textbook is required (he noted that often only small portions of a textbook are revised, yet the price differential is significant).
- A brief discussion ensued regarding the use of online textbooks, e-books, black & white versions, discount on-line books sellers (half.com, e-bay, etc.), and student book-sharing as all possible options to consider for cost containment.

(Note: Trustee Gail Williams arrived at 9:25 a.m.)

- Trustee Wetmore noted that any requirement for a switch to online or e-books would also raise another cost consideration: students would then be required to incur an expense for new laptops or tablets. He indicated any such switch, if considered, would need to keep this cost in mind and, if implemented, should be done slowly, in stages, if at all. Trustee Wetmore added that the Chairman of the Board of Trustees stated the Board needed to provide enough advance notice to the students when raising tuition and fees. Trustee Wetmore stated that the costs borne by students in all areas, including textbooks, should contain that same advance notification to students.
- Dr. Rinker noted that another avenue of cost containment would be to explore increased library usage, inter-library loans, and the concept of state-supported digital libraries.
- Responding to a query from BOTAA Committee Chairman Doyle concerning the average cost for a semester of books (assuming standard 15-hour), both Trustee Wetmore and Trustee Rodriguez offered the range would be approximately $300-700, depending upon the major.
- Trustee Eberhard-Asch suggested polling computer vendors/suppliers (Dell & Apple) to see if they offered any incentives in the area of online books when purchasing student computers/laptops.
- Trustee Gail Williams apologized for being late; offered that she has heard concerns not only about the cost of the textbooks, but the utilization thereof, with some students indicating they had purchased a $150 textbook which was only used one time.
• Dr. Free noted that much of the cost of textbooks is not in printing and production but in development costs and payments to the author(s) and those costs would not decrease because of a change in the way a textbook is delivered. She reported briefly on student usage of textbooks at Eastern, including use of library book reserves and sharing between students.
• Ken Bedini spoke briefly about a university which utilized a book rental system with success, adding the key to their success was that the faculty had to agree to use the same textbook for at least two years.
• Dr. Bernstein offered a solution might be to interest potential donors to break out of their usual thinking and consider granting book scholarships.
• Dr. Rinker added that faculty should be part of any discussions when exploring textbook cost containment, along with students and library directors.
• Dr. Tordenti spoke briefly regarding a book swap program at Eastern in the early 1980s.
• Dr. Williams noted the discussion centering on costs and the students’ ability to buy textbooks was important, while also reflecting upon the importance and the necessity of the students’ actually reading the textbooks.
• BOTSL Chairman Panciera thanked all individuals for their comments on this important topic.

In closing the discussion, Dr. Feroe echoed BOTSL Chairman Panciera’s appreciation for the input provided. It was agreed that each university was to convene a group at their university consisting of the university representatives from today’s meeting (Student Life, Academic Affairs) and also include members from faculty, library, and students and prepare their recommendation(s) for textbook cost containment. Those university groups should submit their recommendations to their university presidents who would, in turn, review, revise as appropriate, and then share with the Chancellor.

3. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. BOGHE Summary – December 16, 2009 and January 10, 2010 meetings. Dr. Bermúdez provided a brief report on overview of items of interest from the aforementioned reports provided to the Committee.

B. 2010-2011 Sabbatical Leave Recommendations. A copy of the sabbatic leave recommendations from the universities which were on the Finance & Administration Committee agenda were provided to Committee members for their information. Trustee Williams inquired as to the fiscal impact of the leaves and Dr. Feroe responded that the leaves were granted in accordance with the AAUP collective bargaining agreement.

ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Motley moved to adjourn; Trustee Eberhard-Asch seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 10:20 a.m.