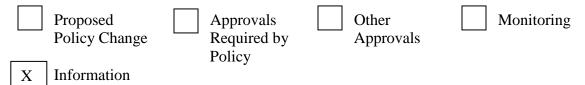# MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Agenda Item Summary Sheet

Committee: Academic and Student Affairs   **Date of Meeting:** June 15, 2010

Agenda Item: Follow-up to OLA Evaluation of System Office

☐ Proposed Policy Change   ☐ Approvals Required by Policy   ☐ Other Approvals   ☐ Monitoring

☒ Information

Cite Policy Requirement, or explain why item is on the Board Agenda
The Chair of the Board of Trustees requested that each Committee review Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA) areas of concern under their purview.

Scheduled Presenters:
Linda L. Baer, Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs

Background Information:
➢ The evaluation was requested by the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees Chair, and it was authorized by the Legislative Audit Commission.

➢ The OLA report was presented to the Board of Trustees Audit Committee and a subsequent memo from Board Chair David Olson charged each committee with a review and possible actions in the respective areas of concern, six of which are under the purview of this committee:

1) System-wide academic planning and curriculum development;
2) Approvals of campus proposals to begin, revise, or close programs;
3) Faculty professional development;
4) Impact and cost-effectiveness of online instruction;
5) Oversight of customized training and continuing education; and
6) Oversight of specialized training in firefighting and emergency medical services.

➢ The June meeting will include a review of actions steps in the six areas of concern as discussed at the April and May meetings of this committee.

BACKGROUND

The Academic and Student Affairs work plan for responding to the OLA evaluation includes the following topics for consideration at the June meeting:

- Actions to address the issues in the OLA report

- Implications for FY11 ASA Committee and Division Work Plans

The OLA evaluation of the system office as presented to the Board of Trustees led to identification of six areas of concern under the purview of the ASA Committee of the Board of Trustees. The ASA Committee reviewed key findings, contextual information, and proposed action steps for the six areas as part of the April and May meetings. The June meeting of the Committee will include a review of the following action steps for the six areas of concern.

Areas of Concern

The Academic and Student Affairs Division is taking steps in each area identified by the Office of the Legislative Auditor to:

1. Review existing budget allocations and staffing;
2. Evaluate current and future work plans to ensure that essential core functions are preeminent in the utilization of staff and that non-core activities are evaluated in light of budget considerations for FY 12 and FY 13;
3. Consider reorganizing service areas that do not require system-level oversight, including providing services through one of the system's institutions;
4. Use technology to create efficiencies in service delivery; and
5. Develop performance measures.

The results of the activities described in the following outline will also support a progress report to the Legislative Audit Commission in January 2011.

1. **Impact and cost-effectiveness of online instruction**

Primary Finding - "A majority of MnSCU presidents are satisfied with the system office's activities supporting online education, but the overall impact of Minnesota Online has not yet been systematically assessed." (p. 63)

Action Steps -
- Evaluate the cost of online delivery to students (spring 2010);
- Use Quality Matters (or a comparable rubric) when developing courses (current/ongoing);
- Provide resources to institutions to support Quality Matters (current/ongoing);
- Support the cost of training on applying the Quality Matters Rubric and Peer Review Certification for up to 10 faculty and/or staff (current);
- Implement student support services in *StudentsFirst* (partial completion by June 2011);
- Provide ongoing training to staff for serving online students (spring 2010);
- Develop set of performance measures and dashboard (2010).

2. **Oversight of customized training and continuing education**

Primary Finding - "The system office plays a limited role in oversight of customized training, and many institution presidents question the value of this system-level oversight." (p. 65)

Action Steps -
- Transition oversight to a new Business & Industry Outreach Council comprised of college and university customized training and continuing education administrators, a president, a community member and Office of the Chancellor staff (January 2010, on-going);
- Secure a system-level agreement for online registration and payment for customized training and continuing education as recommended in the report (June 2010);
- Fund innovative projects that serve industry employers and incumbent workers (2008-09 funding awarded, 2010 funding commences in fall 2010);
- Complete a new performance measures report for customized training and continuing education that supports Fund 120 allocation expectations and provides information to the Allocation Framework Technical Advisory Committee (August 2010 and on-going).

3. **Oversight of specialized training in firefighting and emergency medical services**

Primary Finding - "The Fire/EMS Center is a less essential part of the MnSCU system office than it once was, and the need for specialized oversight of firefighting and EMS training by the

system office is unclear." (p. 69)

Action Steps -

The Fire/EMS/Safety Center is re-positioning its activities to focus on its system-level oversight role in safety and all-hazards training and compliance for the system's colleges and universities statewide.   Toward this end, the following action steps are in process:

- Evaluation of the Center's role in fire and EMS training will be reviewed through three focus group sessions (June 2010);
- Consideration of transition of the Center from Academic and Student Affairs Division to Finance Division in the Office of the Chancellor (June 2010);
- Realignment of staff and budget based on the preceding evaluations (July 2010).

4.   System-wide academic planning and curriculum development

5.   Approvals of campus proposals to begin, revise, or close programs

Primary Findings –

"The MnSCU system office has usually conducted reviews of new program proposals in a reasonable amount of time." (p. 59)

"Many campus officials have not been satisfied with the ASA Division's efforts to foster ideas for new academic programs and reduce program duplication among campuses." (p. 60)

Action Steps -

- Reduce time to approval through technological process improvements for program application submission and review and system wide management of program inventory data (winter 2011);
- Develop guidelines and provide data to support institution, region, and statewide program management decisions (June 2011);
- Develop state-wide and regional processes so that program closure decisions lead to more efficient operations while continuing to ensure access and responsiveness (winter 2011);

6.   Faculty professional development

Primary Finding – "The system office has played a reasonable role in promoting the professional development of faculty members, but this role should be re-evaluated as budgets grow tighter." (p. 61)

Action Steps -

- Create a highly focused work plan of system-office faculty development for 2011-15 to ensure system priorities are productively addressed in the area of student learning outcomes and key teaching strategies and methods to improve them;

- Obtain current opinions of faculty, deans and chief academic officers regarding need for CTL programs and services;
- Conduct regular needs assessment on campus faculty development to identify specific strengths and weaknesses. Identify methods to achieve greater efficiency, stability and consistency in campus-based faculty professional development. Encourage increases in inter-institutional, possibly regional, faculty development programs.