

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

**BOARD ACTION**

**APPOINTMENT OF PRESIDENT OF  
NORTH HENNEPIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**BACKGROUND**

Chancellor McCormick initiated the search for a new president of North Hennepin Community College upon the announcement of the retirement of President Ann Wynia.

**Executive Search Consultant**

After issuance of an RFP for executive search consultants, Narcissa Polonio, ACCT, was retained to assist with the recruitment and selection for this position. This selection was based on the consultant's experience in higher education, specifically with community colleges, and a focus on ability to recruit diverse candidates.

**Search Advisory Committee**

Chancellor McCormick appointed a Search Advisory Committee consisting of the following members:

Chair: Cheryl Frank, President, Inver Hills Community College

Members: Elaina Bleifield, Dean of Science, Mathematics and Health Careers  
Matthew Antonio Bosch, Director of Diversity and Multiculturalism  
Margaret Gile, Library Technician  
Bruce Lebus, Philosophy Faculty  
Paul Melchior, Biology Faculty  
Erin Morris, Student  
Jessica Nguyen, Student  
Larry Schaaf, Dean of Academic and Technology Services  
Terry Sharp, NHCC Foundation Board  
Shelly Siegel, Director of TRIO Programs  
Calvin Walker, NHCC Advisory Committee  
Julie Zieminski, Physical Education Faculty

In addition to the search chair, the following individuals served on the search committee in an ex-officio capacity:

1  
2 OOC Liaison: Linda Skallman, Associate Vice Chancellor of Human Resources  
3 Campus Liaison: Sue Appelquist, Chief Human Resources Officer  
4

5 Process: Preliminary steps began in October 2009, with the appointment of the committee and initial  
6 advertising of the vacancy announcement. Consultant Polonio assisted in the drafting of a profile for  
7 the position, focusing on the specific needs of North Hennepin Community College.  
8

9 The position was advertised nationally in a variety of higher education and diversity publications. At  
10 the same time, Consultant Polonio initiated a recruitment campaign.  
11

12 In January 2010, the committee reviewed 33 potential candidates. After review, the field of candidates  
13 was narrowed to nine individuals for initial screening interviews.  
14

15 In February 2010, nine candidates were interviewed in a confidential setting. Interview questions  
16 focused on experiences and qualifications relevant to the position.  
17

18 The committee then narrowed the pool to four candidates who were invited to the campus for  
19 interviews. Thereafter, the committee forwarded three names to Chancellor McCormick for further  
20 consideration. Two days before the interview, one candidate withdrew who had accepted another  
21 position.  
22

### 23 **Chancellor's Review Process**

24

25 Chancellor McCormick enlisted an additional consultant to help predict talent and success among the  
26 three semi-finalists. Talent Plus, a national consulting organization, interviewed the three semi-finalists  
27 in a structured interview format to look at predictors of success.  
28

29 Thereafter, Chancellor McCormick initiated a rigorous interview process of each of the semi-finalists,  
30 including interviews with the following:  
31

- 32 • Board of Trustees Representatives (Ruth Grendahl, Clarence Hightower, James Van Houten)
- 33 • Chancellor and Vice Chancellor for Human Resources
- 34 • Chancellor's Cabinet Members  
35

36 Information from each element of the interview process was collected and summarized. This  
37 information was reviewed to develop a recommendation of the finalist to be made to the full Board for  
38 approval.  
39

40 Dr. O'Brien is currently on leave from his position as academic vice president and chief academic  
41 officer at Century College to direct the "Students First" project, a Minnesota State Colleges and  
42 Universities system initiative to improve student services.  
43

44 In 2008-2009, O'Brien served as acting president of Century College. Before becoming Century's  
45 academic vice president, he was an associate vice chancellor and system director for instructional  
46 technology in the system office, and an instructor at Normandale Community College, Augustana  
47 College in South Dakota and the University of Minnesota. He also has been an adjunct instructor at  
48 Augsburg College and the University of St. Thomas and has taught at O'Gorman High School in Sioux  
49 Falls, South Dakota.

