

**MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
APRIL 20, 2010**

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*Academic and Student Affairs Committee Members Present:* Chair Dan McElroy, Trustees Christine Rice, Duane Benson, Cheryl Dickson, Jacob Englund, James Van Houten and Louise Sundin.

*Other Board Members Present:* Trustees David Paskach, Scott Thiss, Thomas Renier and Christopher Frederick.

*Leadership Council Committee Co-Chairs Present:* Senior Vice Chancellor Linda Baer and President Patrick Johns.

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Academic and Student Affairs Committee held a meeting on April 20, 2010, at Wells Fargo Place, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Board Room, 30 East 7<sup>th</sup> Street in St. Paul. Chair McElroy called the meeting to order at 12:35 pm.

**1. Minutes of March 17, 2010**

*The minutes from the March 17, 2010 Academic and Student Affairs Committee Meeting were approved as written.*

**2. Academic and Student Affairs Update – Senior Vice Chancellor Baer**

Minneapolis Community and Technical College student Aaron Spiegel was named to *USA Today's* 2010 All-USA Community College Academic Team. The American Association of Community Colleges bases this recognition on leadership, service and academic excellence.

Aaron, a psychology student, found a way to offer low-cost medical care to students on his Minneapolis campus, something that had been tried in the past without success. A student health clinic opened in November, and plans are already underway to expand.

He founded Wellness Advocates for You and is now developing a year-round Wellness Advisory Committee. Under his presidency of the MCTC's Student Senate, the Student Association was named the best student government group in the state by the Minnesota State College Student Association.

Aaron was honored along with 19 other students during the at the American Association of Community Colleges convention in Seattle April 17-20. Phi Theta Kappa, an international honor society for two-year colleges, administers the selection process.

- St. Cloud State University (SCSU) is one of ten institutions selected to participate in the International Academic Partnerships Program, funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE).

This is a new initiative that seeks to increase the number of international partnerships between higher education institutions in the U.S. and those in India. SCSU's application stood out for its demonstrated support from both administration and faculty, commitment to increasing internationalization on campus, and the desire to foster a partnership with an Indian institution.

- St. Cloud State University is one of 74 colleges and universities selected as an exhibitor and partner at the inaugural USA Science and Engineering Festival in Washington, D.C. this October.

The Festival is the country's first national science festival and is a collaborative effort of over 500 of the country's leading science and engineering organizations aiming to reignite the interest of science and engineering in the nation's youth.

- Consultants to the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) have asked to review the system's transfer processes given its past good work.

Key areas of interest by Kansas State University researcher Marcia Schuley, who currently is a consultant to the MHEC, are: use and integration of Degree Audit and Review System and u.select; articulation agreements; use of transfer specialists to support transfer processes; the Joyce Foundation FASTrac Initiative in support of adult education and transition to college and work; and also the system's Students First efforts.

### **3. Proposed New Board Policy 3.38, Career Information (Second Reading)**

Discussion of this agenda item did not take place at this meeting. It will be included in the May agenda.

### **4. Proposed Amendments to Board Policy 3.24 System and Institutional Missions (Second Reading)**

This was a second reading of this proposed amendment to the system policy pertaining to system and institutional missions. This amendment is in response to the Office of Legislative Audit (OLA) Study findings related to the frequency of mission approvals by the Board of Trustees and alignment of college mission statements with system and industry needs.

Senior Vice Chancellor Baer said during future committee meetings there will be an effort to present campus mission reviews at the same time as campus profiles. Major mission changes may be presented as a stand-alone agenda item.

The amendment requires a first and second reading of requests for a change in mission allowing the authority to offer a new award. The amendment also would give the Chancellor the authority to approve minor revisions to an approved mission and vision statement.

Trustee Van Houten said the Board should be advised of any minor revisions to missions or vision statements approved by the Chancellor. Trustees agreed to revise the amendment language to: “The Chancellor shall have authority to approve minor revisions to an approved mission and vision statement and shall report such changes to the Board.”

*A motion was made by Trustee Englund, seconded by Trustee Rice and carried that the Academic and Student Affairs Committee recommend that the Board of Trustees approve the following amended motion:*

*The Board of Trustees approves the proposed amendment to Policy 3.24 System and Institutional Missions.*

#### **5. Proposed Amendment to Board Policy 3.29 College and University Transcripts (Second Reading)**

This was a second reading of this policy amendment which would designate the eTranscript within the Integrated Statewide Records System (ISRS) as an official transcript for students transferring within the system.

The eTranscript was developed as a way of streamlining the transfer process. Transcript information will be transferred automatically, so students will not have to request a transcript or pay a fee.

Trustee Englund asked if such transcripts would be transferrable to or accepted by institutions outside the system. Senior Vice Chancellor Baer said that would likely depend on if the requesting institution accepts eTranscripts.

Trustee Sundin asked if the eTranscript could be forwarded to potential employers. Associate Vice Chancellor Mike Lopez said privacy laws would prevent this electronic transcript to be sent directly to employers outside the system. In these instances, students will need to request a paper transcript.

*A motion was made by Trustee Dickson, seconded by Trustee Benson and carried that the Academic and Student Affairs Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees adopt the following motion:*

*The Board of Trustees approves the proposed amendment to Policy 3.29 College and University Transcripts.*

#### **6. Proposed Amendment to Board Policy 3.26 Intellectual Property (First Reading)**

**Presenter:**

Gary Hunter, System Director for Intellectual Property

This was a first reading of an amendment to the policy pertaining to the ownership of intellectual property within the system.

This amendment was developed using input from a policy review committee comprised of representatives from technical and community colleges, universities, labor unions and the Office of the Chancellor.

Mr. Hunter said this is the first time the system's intellectual property policy, which is eight years old, has been through the review process. He said much has transpired over the last decade regarding intellectual property and as technology continues to advance, the issues become more complex. This proposed policy is a balance of the interests that are involved in the system and it opens the door for any employee to own his or her scholarly work, which the previous policy did not address, he said.

Rod Henry, President of the Inter-Faculty Organization (IFO), said his organization has reviewed the proposed policy and has several concerns:

- **Part 3, Subpart I., Faculty:** The IFO would like to remove language that refers to full-time employees performing work in bargaining units 209 and 210 because there are many non-teaching faculty, such as coaches, librarians and counselors, who may be in a position to create scholarly work related to that activity. This definition is unclear if they would retain intellectual property rights to that work, Mr. Henry said, adding the IFO does not believe intellectual property rights should turn on the hours per week people in these positions are scheduled to work during a given term.
- **Part 3, Subpart N., Professional Staff:** The IFO would like to retain the current definition of professional staff. In the past, there have been instances of professional staff, such as deans, directors and academic vice presidents, who have done a variety of works while in those positions and the IFO believes they should be entitled to intellectual property rights to those works.
- **Part 4, Ownership of Intellectual Property Rights:** Mr. Henry said the IFO wants to retain the current definition in this area because if the current scholarly work provisions are preserved, there is no need to revise this language.

- **Subpart B, No. 4, Substantial Use of Resources:** Mr. Henry said the IFO would like to propose a language change pertaining to the use of substantial resources occurs when resources are provided beyond the normal professional technology and technical support supplied by the college, university and/or Office of the Chancellor to an individual or individuals for development of a project or program. He said the key issue is with the next line: “Use of resources will be considered substantial when an individual receives additional support for development of a work product beyond the normal professional, technology or technical support made available by a college, university and/or Office of the Chancellor to individuals in comparable positions at the same institution.” The proposed policy language creates a situation in which a person could think he or she has done everything in accordance with the rules and regulations in the creation of a work, but then after the fact is told he or she received substantial resources. The IFO is suggesting a statement be added in the language that indicates prior to the provision of substantial resources, colleges and universities shall notify receiving individuals that use of the resources will result in an institutional claim to an interest in any work created using the resource.

Mr. Henry said he would provide a written copy of his comments to Trustees. He added he may be working from an earlier draft of the policy.

Trustee Van Houten asked if defining something as intellectual property rights in this policy is the same as granting it copyright under the law.

Mr. Hunter said there are four types of intellectual property. There are patents, copyrights, trademarks and trade secrets. This policy pertains to the ownership of those, based on who creates them, the type of work they are and what resources are used. The system doesn't typically deal with many trade secrets, and trademarks are generally owned by the institutions. The system had two patents last year, he added.

Trustee Van Houten asked if intellectual property is similar to a copyright, meaning it can be accessed or used by others, but not for profit.

When someone owns the copyright to their work, they control it, Mr. Hunter said. They control who can use the work, who can copy it and whether or not it can be distributed. This policy seeks to insert a mechanism that allows the state to control property assets that are being developed within the system, before the transfer of ownership to an employee.

Trustee Van Houten said on the basis of that description, he has a serious concern about some of the definitions under scholarly work. The description of a syllabus, he said, is that it is a document that contains elements of the corresponding course outline, standards for evaluation of student learning, and additional information that reflects the creative work of the faculty member. A syllabus could be different for each professor teaching a class. The only way the system can ensure that there is quality teaching taking place in the classroom and that the students' expectations based on the catalog description are being met is by review of the course syllabus and there needs to be wide access to it. He said when he taught at the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota, his department had a three-ring binder and every syllabus for courses being taught that semester was put into it. Students had access to this and could compare the different teachers and course content and make decisions on which course to take based on it. If a syllabus is considered scholarly work in this policy, that implies that a faculty member would have the right to determine who has access to it. This lack of access would be inappropriate at a public institution, he said.

Senior Vice Chancellor Baer said that in the next policy under consideration, Policy 3.21 Undergraduate Course Transfer, Part 4, there is language that would require the posting of course outlines. That may crosswalk to Trustee Van Houten's concern about what will be posted and available to students, she said.

A course outline is significantly less detailed than a syllabus, Chair McElroy said. Senior Vice Chancellor Baer agreed.

Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF) has language in its labor agreement that states faculty own their course syllabi, Mr. Hunter said. He said when the policy was drafted eight to ten years ago, ownership of the course syllabi was a big issue. At that time it was classified as a scholarly work, which means, by policy, the syllabi is owned by the faculty member. In order to be eligible for copyright, there needs to be a certain minimum of creativity and it has to be the original expression in a fixed tangible medium. Many syllabi would be copyrightable, therefore considered intellectual property, he said.

There is Board Policy 3.22 Course Syllabi, which may be a more appropriate policy in which to address this issue, Mr. Hunter said.

Chair McElroy asked if copyrighted is confidential.

The distribution of a copyrighted work is up to the copyright holder, Mr. Hunter said. Under the Government Data Practices Act, if someone made a request for a course syllabus, they would be granted access to it. What use corresponds with that is limited by the copyright of the syllabi, he said.

Chair McElroy said the “use” of the syllabi he is concerned with is use by a student so he or she can understand and evaluate the content of a course.

Trustee Van Houten said he would like to have student access to course syllabi guaranteed if the policy is going to be approved. The idea that a professor can decide who is allowed to know what he or she is teaching in a course approved by an institution as part of a program approved by the Board of Trustees is unacceptable, he said.

Trustee Rice said questioned how distance learning fits into the definition of scholarly works.

If a faculty member creates an online course, that would be considered scholarly work and he or she would own it, Mr. Hunter said. However, if the system commissions the work through a written agreement, there is language in that agreement that states the ownership of the work will be transferred from the faculty member to the college or university. Minnesota Online issues grants for the development of online courses and then the college or university owns the course, Mr. Hunter explained.

Chair McElroy said Policy 3.22 Course Syllabi has not been reviewed since 2002 and he suggested that be scheduled for review by the Board. He asked if the IFO would consider the issue of making course syllabi available to students in advance of taking a course and offer an opinion when the policy is next considered.

Trustee Dickson asked that as part of the next discussion on this policy, the distinctions between a course outline and course syllabi be made clear. Is one preferable and, if so, why? This would be helpful since it appears a course outline could be carried over year after year, while a course syllabus could change each time the course is offered.

Mr. Hunter said the last sentence of the Policy 3.22 requires a faculty member to provide a copy of his or her syllabi to the college or university for use in local administrative purposes.

Trustee Van Van Houten said issues brought up about course outlines and syllabi could be addressed and resolved in the review of Policy 3.22, as long as it is clear that the language in both policies relate to each other.

Trustee Frederick said he has a concern with the definition in Subpart R, Student Employee. It says “a student employee is a student who is paid by any system college, university, or the Office of the Chancellor for services performed. Graduate assistants and work-study students are student employees.” Graduate assistants often do scholarly work during their employment, such as preparing course syllabi or doing instructional materials,

and it is unclear if this work would be considered scholarly work and the assistant would have intellectual property rights to it, Trustee Frederick said.

Mr. Hunter said if they are teaching a course as a graduate assistant, then they would be considered faculty under the definition of faculty and they would own their scholarly work, such as course materials created for a class.

If that is the case, then the language that states graduate assistants are student employees should be changed, since they actually would be faculty members, Trustee Frederick said.

Chair McElroy agreed and asked Mr. Hunter to clarify the definition in Subpart R pertaining to graduate assistants who teach.

Anne-Marie Ryan-Guest, vice president with the MSCF, addressed the Trustees. She said the MSCF would like to be involved the next time the policy concerning syllabi and the common course outline is discussed.

Chair McElroy said additional input would be helpful. Trustees will need help in understanding the differences between course outlines and syllabi and which are most helpful to students. They do not want students to feel that they are taking “mystery courses” because they lack access to information.

Course outlines and course syllabi are very dissimilar, Trustee Van Houten said. There could be three professors teaching the same course based on the same course outline, but all three could have a different course syllabus. The courses could have differences in textbooks, required readings, papers and examinations. He said he has talked to at least two of the system’s presidents who have told him that it is not routine at their campus for the deans, or even their department chairs, to review and approve the professors’ syllabi for a given course. There is a significant difference between course outlines and course syllabi and he said the syllabi is where the control has to lie.

Ms. Ryan-Guest offered a comparison of a course outline and syllabus. The common course outline, she said, is developed when members of the department come together and determine the overall course content and student learner outcomes. This is the document that is used for transfer. She said the syllabus allows the teacher the latitude to teach the defined course contents to his or her strength. For example, one teacher may teach an economics course with an analytical focus, while another may teach it with a theoretical focus. The course outlines indicates the content, while the syllabus gives an indication of how the information will be delivered to students. That is where the syllabi is different and becomes the teacher’s intellectual property because he or she has created it based on their personal strengths, she said.

Chancellor McCormick said it is imperative that transfer and transparency be kept as important goals during the discussion of course syllabi and course

outlines. There is a need to improve transfer and these documents can assist in that effort, he said.

Chair McElroy said it is understandable that faculty would have concerns that their work could be easily copied or stolen. However, students have the right to know in advance information about potential courses. It will be necessary to work together to find a balance, he said.

## **7. Proposed Amendment to Board Policy 3.27 Reproduction and Use of Copyrighted Materials (First Reading)**

This is a first reading of a policy that addresses the copyright issues that arise within the system. The current amendment seeks to provide guidance to help system colleges, universities and their respective students and employees comply with federal copyright laws.

The copyright policy aims to help institutions protect their copyrights through registration and placement of a copyright notice on certain materials that will be displayed or disseminated to the public, Mr. Hunter said. It also has a legal compliance component. This policy is simplified since ownership issues have been moved to Policy 3.26.

Trustee Dickson said in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, copyrights are owned by the system, while at the University of Minnesota it appears copyrights are owned by the University's Board of Regents. She asked Mr. Hunter to explain the difference.

When a person looks up a copyright, it will indicate the owner is the Board of Trustees, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. There are some programs out there that are owned by the system, but they are being home-grown at a local institution. In those cases, the Board of Trustees and the institution both will be listed in the copyright registration name to help guide people to the proper institution. An example would be the GPS Life Plan, which is a project developed by and registered to Century College, in addition to the system.

Trustee Rice asked for a clarification of language that refers to the sharing of new knowledge for course development to improve student learning, such as through creative commons licenses.

Creative Commons is a non-profit organization that is leading the charge for free sharing of information, such as scholarly works, Mr. Hunter said. A person can post his or her scholarly work on a database called a creative commons with certain types of licenses, such as right to attribution or a right to make derivative works, meaning allowing a change in the original work to create something. Creative Commons is a vehicle for people to share information with the goal of advancing student learning, he said.

**8. Proposed Amendment to Board Policy 3.21, Undergraduate Course Credit Transfer (First Reading)**

This was the first reading of this policy amendment which includes language to improve transfer for students. A recent audit of the system conducted by the Legislative Auditor noted a number of problems with credit transfer that were cited by students.

The proposed amendment to the transfer policy would address these problems by including a requirement that course outlines be posted on college and university websites; that colleges and universities maintain course equivalencies on the u.select database; and that information be provided to students regarding links to transfer information websites and the appeal process related to transfer decisions.

Senior Vice Chancellor Baer said this policy has been revamped in order to ensure students have access to accurate information about transfer course equivalencies. It also is a supporting policy for the Students First project.

Policy language has been strengthened in several areas, including the use of the course outline in order to evaluate courses for transfer. The Degree Audit and Reporting System (DARS) and the u.select database are housed within the Office of the Chancellor. Having this as the official repository with up-to-date information will improve the transferability information for students, Senior Vice Chancellor Baer said.

Part 8 of the amendment deals with the student appeals process. Students have expressed concern that they were not adequately informed about their option to appeal decisions to the system office. Language has been added to require that when colleges and universities provide students with a transfer evaluation, they shall also provide information about the right to appeal, the appeal process, and links to the system and college or university appeal policies. This information shall also be made available on each college and university website, course catalog and transfer-related publications, she said.

The use of an eTranscript, approved by the committee in a previous agenda item, will address student concerns about the length of time it for transcripts to be forwarded to their new schools and processed. And finally, the staff has developed a plan improve the training of campus staff involved in transfer, as well as the dissemination of transfer information to campuses.

Trustee Englund said he is happy to see the system making progress on the issue of successful transfer. He said the process should be simple and accessible. There is also a great need for getting this information out to students.

Senior Vice Chancellor Baer said the Office of the Chancellor is looking at a marketing plan and determining which vehicles, such as campus newspapers or student e-mail, are the most effective way to get information to students. Office

staff is looking to work with students to determine the best ways to communicate the information, she said.

Trustee Benson said his concern is that most of the attempts at transfer are done after a course has been taken. There is a need to inform the students prior to the taking of a course since they don't often realize they will have problems with transfer until long after they have taken a course.

Chair McElroy said students also have expressed concerns about how a course will transfer. There is a difference between a course being accepted as a required course or as an elective.

It is necessary to work with students to encourage them to create a smart transfer plan at the onset of their college career, Senior Vice Chancellor Baer said. Typically, students who planned ahead and received transfer information early were far more likely to be successful when it came to transferring. Students who don't think they will want to transfer also should be given information at orientation on the need for a transfer plan since their career plans may change in the future.

A good marketing plan regarding getting information out on student transfer is important for students and constituencies, Trustee Rice said.

There are three different communications involved in this discussion, Trustee Van Houten said. One is the course outline, which follows the general approval of the department faculty and has been approved by the dean. The second is the course catalog description, which briefly describes what is in the course outline, and that is what students see. The third is the course syllabus. He said the course outline is available to other colleges deciding whether or not they will accept the course in a transfer, but the faculty syllabus doesn't necessarily agree with either the course outline or catalog description since nobody reviews the course syllabus.

The policy states a receiving system college or university shall accept courses in transfer that it determines to be comparable or equivalent to specific courses it offers, Trustee Van Houten said. A comparable or equivalent course is defined as being similar in nature, content and level of expected student performance on course outcomes. The level of expected student performance has to do with evaluations and a course outline does not cover evaluation. Course evaluation is found in the syllabus. If the decision is made to promote the use of the course outline in transfer, there should be some requirement at the institutional level that the department or dean review the syllabus to ensure it agrees with the course outline.

Associate Vice Chancellor Mike López said the definition of a course outline includes the topics to be covered and most importantly the learning outcomes, which is what the institutions are expected to use in determining whether or not courses are comparable. The reason this definition of a course outline was chosen

is that it corresponds almost exactly with what is contained in a curriculum approval form that a faculty member in a department must submit when submitting a course for approval. In terms of the syllabus, the policy also requires that a syllabus has to be provided to students no later than the second class session, he said.

Chair McElroy said Policy 3.22 Course Syllabi will be brought back for review and then Trustee Van Houten's concern about what processes are in place to ensure outlines and syllabuses are aligned can be discussed.

Trustee Frederick said he supports this policy and the use of course outlines. He said he comes from a department where course outlines are used and emphasized and the syllabus only highlights the outcomes that are going to be taught in the class, so as a student, you know what to expect. He said the policy is a giant step forward. Using course outlines are the way to improve transferability, he said.

Trustee Sundin asked if the student associations have reviewed the policy and also agree that it is a step forward.

Each policy goes through a policy council vetting process and student associations are represented on the council, Senior Vice Chancellor Baer said. Policy changes are also discussed during the chancellor's regular conversations with students.

Chair McElroy invited student association representatives to let him know of any concerns they have pertaining to this or other policies. They can share comments during the second reading.

Trustee Van Houten said he would be interested in asking campus presidents if they have policies in place that require the review of syllabi by the deans or department chairs.

Chair McElroy said that would be an appropriate question when reviewing Policy 3.22 Course Syllabi.

## **9. Follow-up to Office of Legislative Audit (OLA) Evaluation of the System Office**

The recent Office of Legislative Audit (OLA) review of the Office of the Chancellor identified six "areas of concern" related to the system's Academic and Student Affairs division. Committee members are reviewing three of those areas at this meeting and the remaining three at the May committee meeting.

### **Impact and cost-effectiveness of online instruction**

The OLA report indicated that there should be an assessment of online education in the system to consider whether online courses and services are providing a high-quality educational experience for students.

Performance measures already are being integrated into the FY 2010-2012 Online Action Plan, Senior Vice Chancellor Baer said. Several key success measures are being developed with Research and Planning, including a dashboard of student success measures for online courses.

To help enhance student success, there are efforts underway not only to help better prepare faculty to teach online, but also to prepare students to take online courses. Online student support services will be bolstered by the Students First initiative and regular audits of online student services, Senior Vice Chancellor Baer said.

Referring to the preparation of online faculty, Trustee Van Houten said this would be an activity that could be centralized easily. Faculty from throughout the system could be taught how to teach online via an online course offered by a centralized source, he said.

Online enrollment increases continue, Senior Vice Chancellor Baer said. Enrollments for online learning have increased by more than 20 percent in each of the last five years and online courses now comprise 17 percent of total system courses.

A biennial cost analysis of online learning was conducted for FY2009. Results included:

- Instructional costs for online courses appear to be comparable to costs for classroom courses;
- Costs for activities other than instruction appear to be slightly higher for online courses/students than for classroom;
- Determining the actual cost differences for activities other than instruction is difficult;
- Additional tuition revenue is invested in critical technology and student support services required to deliver online education.

Biennial cost analysis of online learning will continue, Senior Vice Chancellor Baer said.

Trustee Thiss said it may be helpful if metrics can be benchmarked against national statistics for online learning.

The system offers online learning at one-third to one-half the cost of national online institutions, Senior Vice Chancellor Baer said. National online universities have an average cost of \$12,500, compared to \$4,919 at system two-year colleges and \$6,658 at system universities.

### **Oversight of customized training and continuing education**

In 2009, the system served nearly 8,000 employers with training or services and 184,000 individuals through non-credit instruction.

The OLA report said the system's role in customized training and continuing education is not well defined. Senior Vice Chancellor Baer said some presidents surveyed indicated they didn't see the value of the system office oversight in this area. Some indicated this is a function that can be handled locally.

Senior Vice Chancellor Baer said the office provides the following system-level services:

- Administers the fund for customized training/continuing education. Ninety-eight percent of this fund is distributed directly to colleges and universities according to a defined funding formula or through grants. Two percent is retained by the system for system-wide coordination.
- Serves on the Minnesota Jobs Skills Partnership Board to advocate for competitive grant applications from system institutions.
- Manages system-level communications with statewide business and industry associations and organizations;
- Manages innovation grants to build curriculum to support collaboration and to create services for dislocated and under-employed workers.

Senior Vice Chancellor Baer said in 2009 the Office of the Chancellor, in consultation with continuing education and customized training administrators, agreed on new priorities:

- Support for innovative projects;
- Development of new marketing tools for staff;
- Formation of a new strategic management team of college and university continuing education/customized training administrators;
- Management of system-level communication with statewide business associations and state agencies.

Chair McElroy said the system's role in customized training still appears unclear and needs clarification.

Chancellor McCormick said the system will be faced with severe budget cuts and if campuses are questioning the need for system involvement in this area, it may be an area to consider for reduction.

### **Oversight of specialized training in firefighting and emergency medical services**

The OLA report indicated that the Fire/EMS center is a less essential part of the system office than it once was and the need for system oversight is

unclear. Some presidents surveyed during the audit said the Fire/EMS Center has little impact on training programs.

Senior Vice Chancellor Baer said the Fire/EMS Center oversees 12 fire and 17 emergency management programs statewide to ensure compliance with federal and state standards. The center provides training oversight and services to 3,000 first aid/CPR responders, handles system safety/health/code compliance and all-hazards planning.

The Fire/EMS Center has been located on a campus before. A question may be what additional value is created by providing system oversight out of the Office of the Chancellor, she said.

Chancellor McCormick said during a recent visit to western Minnesota, he talked with firefighters who expressed concern that this center will be eliminated.

Senior Vice Chancellor Baer said recommendations for action steps concerning the areas of concern cited in the OLA report will be brought back before the Board in June.

## **10. Centers of Excellence, Wilder Evaluation**

### **Presenters:**

Greg Owen, Wilder Research  
Ellen Shelton, Wilder Research

In 2005, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities established Centers of Excellence at four state universities and 21 community and technical colleges. The four centers area:

- HealthForce Minnesota, Winona State University
- Advance IT Minnesota, Metropolitan State University
- 360° Manufacturing and Applied Engineering Center of Excellence, Bemidji State University
- Minnesota Center for Engineering and Manufacturing Excellence, Minnesota State University, Mankato

Over the past four years, the centers have focused on investments to recruit and retain students, improve the skills of workers, upgrade equipment, support faculty development, link programs and develop new curriculum. They have built connections among K-12 schools, community and technical colleges, state universities and leading employers.

Wilder Research has conducted evaluations of the centers since their inception. During the most recent evaluation, researchers were asked to give emphasis on the value of the centers as demonstrated in the engagement of and responsiveness

to industry and the support for innovation. Evaluation findings were presented to Trustees.

Centers are showing a level of impact consistent with the time they have had to develop, Mr. Owen said. They are showing the ability to:

- Create new pathways for communication and collaboration among industry leaders, education and learners. Over 90 percent of stakeholders reported evidence that the Center helped to increase communication among colleagues in different programs or institutions.
- Identify industry opportunities, innovations and needed workforce preparation. Over 90 percent of stakeholders reported that the centers helped increase communication between educators and people in industry. Some said center activities caused educators to become more aware of current innovation or challenge. Students are being better prepared for careers as a result of center activities, many reported.
- Help learners of all ages discover and prepare for careers with center focused industries. Stakeholders indicated the center's work led to more student interest and more realistic ideas about careers in the field. Many said the centers also helped learners to become better prepared for those careers.
- Encourage cross-campus activity that strengthens learner opportunities and creates premier course offerings. Over half of faculty and administrators reported at least one example of cross campus activities that were not in place prior to the centers, including shared positions and courses, articulation agreements and other intercampus agreements.
- Champion changes in content and delivery to meet future workforce needs. High proportions of all respondents were able to name a process or product developed with the help of the center that addresses an industry or workplace need better than before.
- Produce revenue and leverage resources to power these objectives. Two thirds of those surveyed reported that the centers helped departments or program acquire other funding or resources. Faculty and administrators surveyed said they believe their association with the centers and their partnership with others through the centers are factors that strengthen the grant proposals they submit for outside funding. During 2009, they document a total of just over \$9.7 million in such funding leveraged by the centers. This includes approximately \$5.7 million from public sources and over \$4 million from private sources.

Mr. Owen said the centers have had 285 identifiable connections with business and industry, 74 connections with industry and trade organizations and 24 connections with government entities since 2005.

Industry partners describe the work of the centers as valuable and place a high value in the current and potential benefit to the state's workforce needs, Mr. Owen said. Many indicated it would be a significant loss if the centers were discontinued.

Results of their evaluation indicate that the Centers of Excellence merit continued funding, Mr. Owen said. They can focus resources on some common purposes which are very interlocked with the strategic focus of the system and they have unique value in convening and facilitating common approaches across institutions in ways that might not otherwise occur.

Centers are also advancing the priorities of the overall system's current strategic plan, including increasing access, opportunity and success for students. By identifying industry workforce needs and championing the courses and programs needed to meet them, they are enhancing the state's economic competitiveness while also promoting high quality programs and services. Through cross-campus coordination, leveraging system capacities and championing new delivery options, they are spearheading innovation to meet educational needs.

Mr. Owen noted that the system could look at different ways to configure the centers, including increasing number of partners in centers; enhancing geographic variability; allowing two-year schools to be the lead institution; or allowing more than one university per center.

Trustee Van Houten asked about a Minneapolis Community and Technical College program mentioned in the report. HealthForce Minnesota Executive Director Jane Foote described the Jump Start program which aimed to make urban youth ready for college. Minneapolis high school seniors were tested and then those needing remedial assistance were offered developmental summer courses in math, science and reading to make sure they were ready for college.

Trustee Van Houten said it appears that the Advance IT Minnesota Center of Excellence has had less of an impact in terms of new curriculum than the other centers. Ms. Shelton said the data may be a bit deceiving since this center is smaller than the others with fewer partners and that resulted in less curriculum development. However, she added that the Center has been instrumental in the development of several new IT courses now available to students.

Trustee Dickson asked how the Centers of Excellence can foster innovation.

Senior Vice Chancellor Baer said the centers have been the incubators of innovation and the system office will continue to review existing governance to perpetuate, support and promote these innovative efforts.

Trustee Van Houten said the changing of the job descriptions of deans to reflect center responsibilities was discussed last year. He said Trustees were told at that

time that the presidents would be held accountable for doing this and he asked if they could receive some feedback pertaining to this at the next meeting.

Chair McElroy said more discussion pertaining to the Centers of Excellence will be needed in the future. Decisions will need to be made on funding. He noted that year-to-year funding impacts center staffing and operation.

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 pm  
Respectfully submitted,  
Margie Takash, Recorder