

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

Agenda Item Summary Sheet

Committee: Academic and Student Affairs

Date of Meeting: May 18, 2010

Agenda Item: Process for Naming of Programmatic Centers

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 Academic and Student Affairs Committee requested an opportunity to discuss emerging programmatic centers within the context of the Centers of Excellence initiative.

Scheduled Presenters:

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

Background Information:

The recent focus on the industry satisfaction and institutional partnership efforts within the Board designated Centers of Excellence has, in part, prompted interest in developing centers in other programmatic areas.

Across the system there exist a variety of programmatic centers. These Center designations often occur out of institutional efforts to identify and elevate distinctive programs in the higher education market place. Contributing to the identification of programmatic centers are external funding sources from the federal government, private industry, and other sources that lead to designation of centers within system institutions.

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

Process for Naming of Programmatic Centers

Background

There is expressed interest in designating programs at individual institutions or among programs at multiple institutions as Centers of Excellence. The purpose of this agenda item is for the trustees to discuss the merits of the idea, review the types of Centers currently in place and identify elements of a process that could lead to the designation of additional system Centers of Excellence.

Initially, it is important to note that the word “center” is used in many different ways; most if not all institutions have centers - Media Center, Student Center, Center for Inter-cultural Affairs, Center for Bioethics. The use of the word center in these contexts would continue to be locally determined. Rather the use of terms like “Center of Excellence” or “Minnesota Center” are the focus of this discussion. It is equally important to clarify that the designation would not imply that additional system resources would be provided.

The Board of Trustees designated Centers of Excellence in manufacturing, engineering, health care, and information technology in October 2005. These Centers are networks for inter-institutional collaboration in response to industry needs. They operate as a unique model in the national landscape of designated Centers of Excellence within higher education systems.

The three Access and Opportunity Centers that are focused on research, best practices and dissemination of results in increasing access to higher education are referred to as the “Access and Opportunity Centers of Excellence.”

In addition to Board-designated Centers of Excellence, system institutions have designated programmatic centers as based in institutional processes or external designations, such as governmental or private programs and appropriations.

There are emerging industry and/or programmatic areas under consideration for programmatic Centers of Excellence within the system. These examples present variations on the Centers concept.

- **Global Studies:** A Request for Statements of Interest was sent to institutions within the past year with specific focus on international/global center designation leading to submissions from several state colleges and universities.
- **Agriculture:** Discussions regarding Farm Business Management have surfaced the need for an overarching approach to address the workforce education and training needs for the Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources industry sector and sub-sectors. The concept envisions a clear partnership between the agri-industry, education, government, and private sector leaders.
- **Biosciences:** Proposals for a Bioscience Center of Excellence were considered in fall 2005 but none were selected for designation by the Board of Trustees. During the past five years a number of institutions have developed greater capacity in this area and there has been a significant system-wide effort at program development and coordination within the biosciences.

If the system were to formally recognize Minnesota Centers or Centers of Excellence, a process would need to be developed. The impetus for naming of a center could include requiring the system or an institution to request designation through a process and criteria such as the following:

- description of entity's purpose, goals, and relationship to the mission and goals of the institution and the system,
- assessment of student and industry need,
- consideration of faculty and financial resources,
- identification of similar services at and coordination with other system institutions,
- affirmation that the system will not provide financial resources to support such designation.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How might the designation of additional Centers of Excellence promote the priorities of the Board and of the System Strategic Plan?
2. What considerations or elements of a process would be needed to be in place?