

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

INFORMATION ITEM
CONNECTING WITH THE CAMPUS

Objective: This program is designed to establish a collective understanding among the trustees of the distinctiveness of each college and university, its unique contributions and its challenges toward achieving the System's mission and strategic plan. This understanding will provide the Board of Trustees with an informed context for making strategic and policy decisions on behalf of the System.

Goals: Four levels of results will be measured to determine success of this program.

Level 1 – Each Trustee will visit one campus. Result: fifteen visits.

Level 2 – Each Trustee will visit two campuses. Result: thirty visits.

Level 3 – Each President will receive at least one visit. Result: thirty-two visits.

Level 4 – Each campus within the system will be visited once. Result: all fifty-four campus/campus locations visited.

Evaluation measures:

A majority of Trustees agree that they learned something new and worthwhile.

A majority of the Trustees agree that the project was worth their time.

A majority of the Presidents agree that the project was time well-spent.

Guidelines: To create an organized approach to campus visits and not overwhelm our campus leadership, the following guidelines will apply to all visits.

- All activity is coordinated through the Board Office and the Board Secretary.
- Trustees will determine a campus they wish to visit and will request approval from the Board Chair through the Board Office.
- The Chair will approve the visit unless special circumstances arise, and it is deemed to be inappropriate at the time.
- The Board Office serves as the agent to make arrangements, including making appointments, travel accommodations and Trustee reimbursement.
- The Board Office confirms the campus appointment day, date and time with the president's office, the Trustee and the Chancellor.
- Trustees should acquire a solid understanding of the college or university by:

- Reviewing materials, such as mission, strategic plan, major programs, Web-site review or other materials identified by the president, and
 - Understanding the Accountability Dashboard, and incorporating a discussion of each indicator as it relates to the Trustees' governance oversight.
- The Trustee will be greeted upon arrival by the university/college president.
 - Trustees should return all business related travel and per diem expenses for appropriate reimbursement.
 - Trustees will be asked to prepare a brief (2-3 minutes) oral report about visits during Board meetings. In addition, a one-page summary should be prepared, each of which will be compiled and considered for possible institutional projects.
 - Visits may be combined with trustees' participation in the spring and fall commencements with prior agreement of the campus president.
 - Trustees are limited to no more than four campus visits per year. The intent is to allow each Trustee to participate easily and have access to a variety of colleges and universities.

Campus Protocol: The following will be expected of Trustees and Presidents.

- Trustees are not to get directly involved in procedural, supervisory or management activity of any kind during the visit. Recommendations, such as staffing levels, termination, promotion, etc., are not appropriate. This is planned as a listening session.
- A suggested period of time for the visit is no longer than a morning or afternoon. The suggested format is one hour privately with the president, one hour for campus tours and one hour as mutually determined by the president and visiting Trustee. (This last hour could be used to have the Trustee meet with the president's cabinet, faculty, student groups or community leaders.)
- Under this program, no president (or campus) will be visited any more frequently than once every six months.

- If two or more Trustees visit a campus together, it will count as one visit. An exception will be made for a Trustee visiting with a newly appointed Trustee and acting in a mentorship role.
- The Board does not want the campus or president to incur any special costs to host the visit.
- It is not required or expected that gifts be given to the visiting trustee. If a college or university would like to present a memento of the visit, a modest gift, such as a pen, pin, t-shirt or a mug, is appropriate.
- Trustee visits should be scheduled when classes are in session and students are present, except when such visits are conducted in conjunction with a commencement ceremony.
- Trustees should avoid visiting the first and last two weeks of a term unless the visits are conducted in conjunction with a commencement ceremony.
- A suggested outline of questions will be developed to add structure to the conversation with the president and allow some time for preparation.

Suggested Questions:

- What are 3-5 trends in higher education that we as a system will need to address in the future?
- What are the 3-5 most important issues facing your university/college?
- What are the 3-5 most important issues facing the system?
- What are 3-5 strategic "fixes" you would make to change things for the better?
- Are there any student issues or concerns that are unique to your college/university?

Suggested report template:

Name of trustee:

Date of visit:

Name of institution/campus visited:

Name of institution president:

Briefly describe the visit – who did you meet with, what did you do/see, is any follow-up action needed, impressions of the campus, what was most memorable.

Evaluation questions:

Did you learn something new and worthwhile?
Was the visit worth your time? Yes No

Yes No

Discussion questions for the president:

- What are 3-5 trends in higher education that we as a system will need to address in the future?
- What are the 3-5 most important issues facing your university/college?
- What are the 3-5 most important issues facing the system?
- What are 3-5 strategic "fixes" you would make to change things for the better?
- Are there any student issues or concerns that are unique to your college/university?