

# MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES STUDY SESSION MINUTES JULY 20, 2010 WELLS FARGO PLACE ST. PAUL, MN

**Trustees Present:** Chair Scott Thiss, Duane Benson, Cheryl Dickson, Jacob Englund, Christopher Frederick, Clarence Hightower, Phil Krinkie, Dan McElroy, Alfredo Oliveira, David Paskach, Thomas Renier, Christine Rice, Louise Sundin and James Van Houten

**Trustees Absent:** Michael Vekich

---

### 1. Call to Order

Chair Scott Thiss convened the study session at 8:00 a.m. and reported that a quorum was present.

### 2. Chancellor Search Process

Chair Thiss introduced Trustee Emeritus David Olson, the immediate past Chair of the Board of Trustees, and the Chair of the Chancellor Search Advisory Committee. Trustee Emeritus Olson reviewed the timeline for the search culminating in Board action on a new chancellor in either January or February 2011. The committee will meet about three times. The RFP for a search consultant was issued in May, and several firms were selected for interviews. A firm will be selected soon. Chair Thiss added that it was important to note that the committee is an advisory committee.

Trustee Emeritus Olson reported that all of the people he contacted to serve on the committee were honored and ready to go to work. The committee members represent the faculty unions, statewide student organizations, Board of Trustees, college and university presidents, the legislature, business and the community:

Don Larsson, President, Inter Faculty Organization  
Greg Mulcahy, President, Minnesota State College Faculty  
Shahzad Ahmad, President, Minnesota State University Association of Administrative  
and Service Faculty  
Travis Johnson, President, Minnesota State College Student Association  
Andrew Spaeth, State Chair, Minnesota State University Student Association  
Clarence Hightower, Vice Chair, Board of Trustees  
Christine Rice, Board of Trustees  
Kevin Kopischke, President, Alexandria Technical and Community College  
Edna Mora Szymanski, President, Minnesota State University Moorhead  
Carlos Mariani, State Representative  
Claire Robling, State Senator

Sharon Sayles Belton, Vice President, Community Relations and Government Affairs,  
Thomson Reuters

Yvonne Cheung Ho, President and CEO, Metropolitan Economic Development  
Association

Mark Chronister, Board of Trustees Chair, St. Catherine University

Paula Pahl, Senior Vice President of Communications, Public Affairs and Corporate  
Responsibility, Best Buy

Trustee Emeritus Olson commented that there are only two trustees on the committee in consideration of the Open Meeting Law as three trustees would be too many. At the first meeting of the committee, they will discuss the characteristics that the Board is looking for in a chancellor. The committee also will discuss its advisory role resulting in forwarding two or three top candidates to the Board of Trustees.

Trustee Renier commented that the committee is very impressive. He observed that while it may not be a factor, the membership has few non-metro people. Trustee Emeritus Olson commented that the two presidents are from greater Minnesota and that they will have a strong influence. Trustee Benson commented that the two legislators also will be helpful.

Vice Chancellor Lori Lamb, Vice Chancellor, Human Resources, reviewed the desired leadership characteristics. The Board had a conversation facilitated by Dr. Kent Eklund at its June meeting. The discussion focused on a number of identified and desired characteristics in the areas of leadership, management, background and experience. The discussion was followed by a survey to which five or six members responded. The information will be given to the search consultant. The identified key elements for a candidate's viability follow: integrity; demonstrated student success; the wherewithal to articulate a vision, drive change in a complex system, make decisions, listen, innovate, take appropriate risks, and adapt to Minnesota and the various cultures around the state. Among the management styles would be the ability to undertake the Board's commitment to accountability for results, to work with a governing board, to lead a strong team and senior staff, and to be effective with groups. Also, ideas included management of human resources and guidance of a complex, geographically dispersed operating environment. A commitment to public service and public education and working with success in workforce and economic development also were listed.

Responding to questions, Vice Chancellor Lamb explained that experience in working with bargaining units is embedded in the issue of dealing with public higher education. It would also be covered in the bullet under management characteristics on managing human and financial resources. There was concern that the characteristics did not say anything about demonstrated commitment to postsecondary education. Chair Thiss commented that to do so would limit the scope of the pool. Following a discussion, there was support for including a demonstrated commitment to public service and public education which could include serving on boards and nonprofit entities.

Vice Chancellor Lamb reported that the desired leadership characteristics will be given to the search firm as a starting point for preparing a position profile. Chair Thiss announced that the Board will ratify the membership of the Chancellor Search Advisory Committee and the desired leadership characteristics at its meeting tomorrow, July 21, 2010. He thanked Trustee Emeritus Olson for giving his time to lead the Chancellor Search Advisory Committee.

**(3) Accountable for Results**

Chair Thiss commented that he has reviewed the time spent by the Board in this higher education journey. Based on per diems, Trustees spend about ten percent of their time on Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system related business. The average is 15 percent which is high but it includes commencements. Chair Thiss indicated that a lot of time is not even counted with regard to reading and preparing for meetings. Chair Thiss commented that the Board has three primary goals for the coming year: selecting a chancellor, connecting with campuses; and engaging in the legislative process. He has asked each committee chair to work with the staff and leadership co-chair to select ideas and measure results. Types of output or measurement could be a report, number, or even a picture with a measurable result. Committees also may add items of their own choosing.

Chair Thiss reviewed the connecting with campus goal and draft document. He explained that the Trustees could provide a brief written report at the conclusion of the campus visit to document their visit. The goal is that there would be no expense to the campus, but the campus may provide a small token. Chair Thiss proposed a three-hour visit, including one hour with president, one hour for a tour and one hour for a meeting with students, faculty, donors, etc. The expectation is that both the presidents and the Trustees have a better understanding of issues as they are brought forward. Chancellor McCormick announced that the presidents are enthusiastic about the visits. He continued that it is important for the Board to focus on its governing role as policy makers. Trustees responded enthusiastically to the campus visits concept. Chair Thiss said that he has asked Trustee Dickson, Chair of the Advancement Committee to fine tune the initiative, including how to measure its progress and results.

With respect to engaging in the legislative process, Chair Thiss reviewed the actions drafted by Dr. Mary Davenport, Director of Government Relations. They include talking points for communicating key system initiatives, hosting gubernatorial discussions, meeting the new governor and having Trustees attend legislative hearings and meetings of interest to the system. The candidate forums provide the opportunity to seek their views on higher education. Trustees will accompany the Chancellor to meet with newly elected legislators and be more visible at legislative meetings and hearings. Staff will coordinate the meetings and attendance at legislative hearings. The Trustees responded favorably to the proposal saying they welcomed the opportunity for more interaction with the legislature. Chair Thiss said that Trustee Dickson and the Advancement Committee also will fine-tune this initiative and develop a final plan with measurable outcomes for review at the September meeting.

Chair Thiss announced that Trustee Benson has agreed to chair an ad hoc committee to plan the October retreat. If anyone is interested in serving on the committee, contact Trustee Benson. He noted that he intends to expand the Vice Chair's role in supporting the Chair, noting that Trustee Emeritus Ruth Grendahl did a lot to support the Chair during her tenure. Chair Thiss has asked Vice Chair Hightower to lead the response to the Office of the Legislative Auditor's report on the Office of the Chancellor. Chair Thiss also informed the Board that he will invite special guests to lead the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance at the start of the meetings. Guests will include, service members, first responders, firefighters, nurses, police officers and others who may have a relationship to the system.

**4. Adjournment**

The study session adjourned at 9:10 a.m.

---

Ingeborg K. Chapin  
Secretary to the Board