

**MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 15, 2011**

Academic and Student Affairs Committee Members Present: Chair Christine Rice; Trustees Duane Benson, Jacob Englund, Alfredo Oliveira, Louise Sundin and James Van Houten.

Academic and Student Affairs Committee Members Absent: Thomas Renier

Other Board Members Present: Trustees Brett Anderson, Cheryl Dickson, David Paskach, Scott Thiss and Michael Vekich.

Leadership Council Committee Co-Chairs Present: Interim Vice Chancellor Larry Litecky and Presidents Cecilia Cervantes and Judith Ramaley.

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Academic and Student Affairs Committee held a meeting on November 15, 2011 at Wells Fargo Place, 4th Floor, Board Room, 30 East 7th Street in St. Paul. Chair Rice called the meeting to order at 1:10 pm.

1. Minutes of October 18, 2011

*Trustee Van Houten asked for a correction in the Academic and Student Affairs Committee minutes from October 18, 2011. He said in the second paragraph of Agenda Item 3. **Proposed Amendment to Policy 3.36 – Academic Programs (First Reading)** the words “the System Will” should be changed to “the Board of Trustees Shall.” With this correction, the minutes were approved.*

2. Academic and Student Affairs Update – Interim Vice Chancellor Larry Litecky

- The Fall Career and Technical Education Conference was held in Plymouth on November 20, 2011. The conference, co-sponsored by the system and the Minnesota Department of Education, was attended by 260 people from secondary and post-secondary institutions. Potential Congressional legislation regarding technical and career education and promising practices and partnerships were conference topics.
- Century College was awarded a WOW Award from the Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications. This award recognizes innovative uses of educational technology in higher education and Century College received it for its use of the GPS LifePlan and E-Folio. Together, these tools help students achieve their educational, career, and personal goals by putting them in charge of creating their own career plans and developing connections with campus resources.

The GPS LifePlan has been adopted by 18 colleges and one university, Interim Vice Chancellor Litecky said. Through partnerships with the state's National Guard, Veterans Affairs, Economic Development and education agencies, additional versions have been created for veterans, workforce audiences and secondary students.

- The annual Academic and Student Affairs fall conference in October was attended by nearly 300 people. Keynote speakers included Chancellor Rosenstone, Steven Spangehl, Vice President for Accreditation Relations at the Higher Learning Commission, and Anna Maravelas, who spoke on incivility in higher education and other organizations. The conference provides an opportunity for campus leaders to hear from one another regarding good/promising practices, to network and to discuss policy issues and mutual concerns.
- Trustee Van Houten asked if it would be possible to get an update on the system's ongoing work with the Bush Foundation to revamp teacher education. Chair Rice said this could be put on a future agenda.

3. Proposed Amendment to Policy 3.36 – Academic Programs (Second Reading)

A proposed amendment of Policy 3.36 - Academic Programs was given a second reading.

Chair Rice said the policy was revised to address a concern expressed by Trustee Dickson that it did not emphasize a system priority on preparing students to be creative, well-rounded, innovative citizens.

Language was also added at the request of Trustee Sundin regarding the annual reports submitted to the Board pertaining to academic program actions. This language clarifies that decisions on programs should be based on standards and goals established by the Chancellor. The amendment now also states that statewide data be used in the program approval process to ensure highest priority is given to meeting the needs of the workforce.

Trustee Van Houten said he believes there is a conflict between state statutes and this proposed Board policy. He said in *Minnesota Statutes 136F.06 Powers and Duties*, it says: “The Board shall ... approve programs of study and requirements for completion of programs...” But in the proposed *Policy 3.36 Academic Programs, Part 5, Academic Program Approval* it says: “Approval of the chancellor is required for new academic programs, changes to existing academic programs, suspension of academic programs and closure of academic programs at system colleges and universities.”

Trustee Van Houten said since Board policy states approval of the chancellor is required for program approval or changes, that would mean the Board is not approving programs or program changes, as is required according to statute.

He said he believes there is another conflict under *Minnesota Statutes, 136F.30 Courses and Programs*: “The board shall review and approve or disapprove campus proposals for adding, deleting or substantially changing programs of study, including graduate and undergraduate academic programs, training in professional semi-professional and technical fields and adult education. The board shall avoid duplicate program offerings. The board may initiate activities to close programs...” The proposed policy amendment states “the chancellor shall maintain the academic program inventory and annually report to the Board of Trustees on the status against program goals established by the Chancellor ...” Since an annual report only summarizes actions already taken, this represents a conflict with the statute, Trustee Van Houten said.

As public officials, Trustees have the fiduciary responsibility to ensure that system policies and procedures do not violate statute, Trustee Van Houten said. The system is too complicated for the simple language that was developed when the system was created for the Board to do the approval of programs, but this is still the statutory language under which the Board is obligated to operate, he said. He added the Board could resolve these conflicts in one of two ways: 1) By asking legislators to revise the statute; or 2) Endeavoring to come up with the effort, the people and the time to carry out the statutory obligation. He said he does not think they have the option to pass a Board policy that disagrees with the statute.

Trustee Van Houten said before the Committee makes a recommendation to the full Board on the proposed policy amendment, he is asking Legal Counsel Gail Olson to offer an opinion if the proposed policy is in conflict with statute.

Counsel Olson said her response would be an informal analysis of the question. She noted delegation questions have arisen periodically in the past for the Board of Trustees. The Legislature delegates a broad array of responsibilities and authority to the Board and she said it is her view that the Board may delegate functions to the Chancellor and the Chancellor, in turn, can delegate functions to the presidents within the confines of Board authority and limitations. It would be difficult for the Board to take on the administrative responsibility of approving all actions pertaining to academic programs since these actions total more than 1,000 per year. She said it is her opinion that it is within the Board’s authority to delegate this responsibility.

She added that the Board has strengthened its role in the process by adding data requirements related to the program approval process and requiring a more detailed annual reporting of actions.

Trustee Van Houten said his question was not whether the new policy is better than the old policy, since he believes that is true. He said his question is if the proposed policy language is in conflict with statute. He asked Counsel Olson if she is advising the Board that there is no conflict between current statutes and the proposed policy being reviewed so it is clear that the Board had legal advice on this issue prior to taking action.

Chancellor Rosenstone asked for clarification on delegated authority. Counsel Olson said all legislative authority is given to the Board, and the Board can delegate some – but not all – functions. One example of a delegated function is the conferring of degrees. The Board does not handle the individual conferring of 34,000 degrees each year, but rather sets the standards by which they are conferred. In the same way, the Board has an academic program policy which sets the standards by which programs are approved or not approved, closed and so forth, she said.

Trustee Van Houten again asked Counsel Olson for representation that there is no conflict between statute and the proposed Board policy before a vote is taken.

Chair Rice said it appears part of the issue is in the interpretation of delegation and what functions, as a Board, they are able to delegate. She said delegation agreements are common and necessary throughout state government.

Trustee Van Houten said Counsel Olson has only said that the Board has authority to delegate certain functions, but she still had not offered an opinion on his question pertaining to potential conflicts between *Statutes 136F.06* and *136F.30* and the proposed policy they are considering.

Counsel Olson said she understood the question to be whether the Board has the authority to adopt this kind of policy.

Chair Rice said in her opinion there is not a conflict between statute and Board policy. The Board previously delegated authority pertaining to academic program approval to the Chancellor and this amended policy does not change that.

Trustee Van Houten said if the Board is given legal advice that there is no conflict, then there will be, to some extent, legal protection that Trustees have endeavored to eliminate conflicts between the two.

Chair Rice asked if any other member of the committee had a concern regarding this issue. No other committee member shared a concern.

President Ramaley said *Minnesota Statutes 136F.06 Powers and Duties* states the Board will award appropriate certificates, diplomas and degrees, but conferring degrees is a function that has been delegated to presidents and that works well. She said she does not see a problem with the proposed policy amendment since it only strengthens current policy and does not modify it.

A motion was made by Trustee Benson and seconded by Trustee Oliveira that the Academic and Student Affairs Committee recommend that the Board of Trustees approve the amendment to Policy 3.36 Academic Programs. Trustee Van Houten called for a roll call vote. Trustees Rice, Benson, Englund, Oliveria and Sundin voted in favor of the motion. Trustee Van Houten voted against the motion. Motion carried.

4. Mission Approval and Campus Profile: Northeast Higher Education District

Presenters:

Sue Collins, President, Northeast Higher Education District

Kenneth Simberg, Provost, Hibbing Community College and Rainy River Community College

Mike Johnson, Provost, Itasca Community College

Kathy Burlingame, Interim Provost, Mesabi Range Community and Technical College

Shawn Bina, Provost, Vermilion Community College

Board policy requires institutions to have their missions approved by the Board at least once every five years. Institutions also are asked to present campus profiles at this time.

The Board of Trustees approved the creation of the Northeast Higher Education District (NHED) in 1999. Under this organizational model, the District serves as a governance structure for five independently-accredited colleges in rural northeast Minnesota.

The District serves more than 4,600 full-year equivalent learners and covers approximately 13,000 square miles consisting of seven counties and many small communities. There is an estimated population of 328,320 in the region and compared to other regions, the District serves an economically disadvantaged population with poverty rates well above state averages.

Over the past five years, enrollment in the District has seen a growth of 9 percent, an increase of 389 students. Students served by the District are primarily traditional-aged students and white. There is a fairly equal representation of men and women in the student population.

President Collins said the District boasts an impressive track record of innovation. Examples include:

- The Applied Learning Institute (ALI) began in 2007 with a legislative appropriation of \$1 million. The District partnered with 17 charter member school districts and 26 high schools in launching the institute to renew career and technical education programming focused on the economic drivers of the region. Since its inception, it has awarded more than \$3

million to member schools and colleges for programming and equipment. Enrollment has grown to more than 1,400 students.

- The District is a founding member of the Minnesota Center for Excellence in Manufacturing and Engineering (MnCEME). MnCEME serves industry as a first-contact resource for continuing education, emerging technology and workforce development. A new engineering education model – Iron Range Engineering – was established. In this model, MSU, Mankato partners with the District’s colleges, businesses and industry to offer the third and fourth year of an engineering program with unique hands-on learning experiences.
- The colleges of the District work collaboratively to secure federal TRIO funding to better serve underrepresented students throughout the region, President Collins said. This grant funding, which totals over \$2.67 million annually, provides support for promising practices.
- NHED colleges provided training through customized or continuing education to approximately 30,000 individuals during fiscal year 2011. Collectively, the colleges generate approximately \$3 million annually in revenue through customized training.
- For over 20 years, the District has been a part of Arrowhead University to offer bachelor’s and master’s-level programming in business, education, psychology, nursing, criminal justice, engineering and management programs throughout the region. Partners include Bemidji State University, the College of St. Scholastica and the University of Minnesota-Duluth.

President Collins said NHED is striving to ensure future financial sustainability by maintaining structurally-balanced budgets and allocating resources to the highest priorities. They are focusing on improving overall operating efficiencies in order to stay current with revenue resources. The District’s total revenues in fiscal year 2010 were \$64 million and expenses were \$59 million.

Each of the five District colleges boasts signature programs or “Centers of Distinction,” President Collins said. They are:

- Electrical Maintenance, Law Enforcement and Nursing at Hibbing Community College;
- Engineering, Natural Resources, Applied Psychology and Education at Itasca Community College;
- Industrial Mechanical Technology, Welding and Process Automation at Mesabi Range Community and Technical College;
- Industrial Technology Maintenance and Nursing at Rainy River Community College;

- Wilderness Management, Fisheries and Wildlife Management, Natural Resource Technology, Forestry/Wildlife and Wildland/Wildlife Law Enforcement at Vermilion Community College.

Each provost offered a brief presentation on his or her college.

Hibbing Community College (HCC): Provost Ken Simberg

- Hibbing Community College has a strong technical education focus. More than 20 technical programs at the college account for 55 percent of enrolled students. These programs provide direct pathways for entry into the workforce.
- A leader in training for workforce development, HCC provides over 123,000 hours of occupational training annually to more than 600 businesses, and generates more than \$1.5 million in annual revenue.
- The college's law enforcement program provides skills training to more than 600 law enforcement officers in northeast Minnesota's Arrowhead Region through Arrowhead Region Law Enforcement Training.
- The University of Minnesota dental clinic, housed on the HCC campus, offers dental services to community members who may be underinsured. Enhanced teaching and learning opportunities benefit University of Minnesota dental students and HCC dental assisting students through this partnership.

Itasca Community College (ICC): Provost Mike Johnson

- ICC offers transfer preparation and career programs in a supportive learning community model that fosters retention and success. The college is a national model for learning communities on a small college campus.
- The college's Engineering Program is nationally recognized for fostering student success in a residential living and learning community. The engineering retention rates exceed 70 percent at the two-year level. The bachelor's completion rate greatly exceeds the national average.
- ICC has a strong history of partnership with local and regional industries and educational entities. Examples include an industry partnership with Minnesota Power, which resulted in a highly successful power generation program. Another successful partnership is with UPM/Kymenne-Blandin Paper Company, which now requires incumbent workers to obtain an ICC Pulp and Paper diploma as a condition of employment.
- ICC serves as the Midwest Regional Leader under the National Center for Pulp and Paper Technology and Training.

Mesabi Range Community and Technical College (MRCTC): Interim Provost Kathy Burlingame

- Campuses at Eveleth and Virginia serve 1,185 full-time enrolled students. The virtual campus offers 25 percent of the college's courses to learners.
- The college offers several programs with area high schools which provide college credit to students. Areas of study include medical fields, welding, building trades, graphic arts, CAD and industrial mechanical technology. In 2010, MRCTC provided technical education opportunities to 17 high schools with 694 ALI registrations and 300 concurrent enrollment registrations. The college also

partners with seven high schools to offer courses in Trigonometry, College Algebra, Economics, College Writing, Chemistry, Physics and Human Biology.

- The college has a strong connection with business and industry and a significant amount of program equipment has come from donations. It is common for industry to come back and use the equipment for training. The college also has state-of-the-art simulation equipment, including an electronic mining shovel simulator donated by Bucyrus International, a world leader in the design and manufacture of mining equipment.

Rainy River Community College (RRCC): Provost Ken Simberg

- Located near the Canadian border, RRCC offers post-secondary education opportunities to this rural area where the next closest college campus is 100 miles away.
- The largest academic programs on campus include liberal arts and practical nursing. Unique programs include Green and Sustainable Construction and Industrial Technology (Maintenance).
- The college is working on the expansion of career and technical education programs to better serve the region. A new initiative is the Science and Math Education Program, which focuses on recruitment and retention of students preparing to become science and math educators.
- The College has a North America Immersion Grant. The educators and community work together to ensure the survival of the unique Ojibwe language and culture.

Vermilion Community College (VCC): Provost Shawn Bina

- Vermilion Community College has capitalized on its unique location and the area's abundance of natural resources to evolve into a residential two-year college which focuses on the niche areas of natural resource use and natural resource protection.
- VCC's unique mission and the fact that it is a residential college draws students from all over Minnesota and the Upper Midwest. In 2010, the VCC student body had graduates from over 220 different Minnesota high schools. About 50 percent of the student body is housed on campus and student housing restraints on student housing could challenge enrollment growth in the future.
- The college vision for the next five years is to further increase its distinction as a vital provider of education programming and career preparation in the natural resources and environmental areas. In 2010, VCC was one of only nine colleges in the country certified to offer Seasonal Park Law Enforcement Ranger Training. In partnership with the National Park Service, VCC trains seasonal park rangers, a critical initial career stop to becoming a full-time federal park ranger.

Trustee Van Houten noted that each of the five colleges maintains its own accreditation and asked President Collins if there has been any consideration given to going to one accreditation. That would be a cost-saving measure for the District, he pointed out.

President Collins said this was discussed as a part of the District's strategic planning efforts in 2009. However, it was determined that the culture and heritage of the Iron

Range favors autonomy and independence. The colleges are exploring shared resources and business services, and there is talk of developing an Arrowhead Institute of Technology which would work to consolidate the customized training services offered across the District, she said.

Trustee Benson moved and Trustee Englund seconded that the following five motions pertaining to Northeast Higher Education District be approved:

- *The Academic and Student Affairs Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees approve the request by Hibbing Community College to reaffirm its vision, mission, purposes, and awards as listed in the executive summary.*
- *The Academic and Student Affairs Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees approve the proposed vision, mission, purposes and awards of Itasca Community College as listed in the executive summary.*
- *The Academic and Student Affairs Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees approve the request by Mesabi Range Community and Technical College to reaffirm its vision, mission, purposes, and awards as listed in the executive summary.*
- *The Academic and Student Affairs Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees approve the vision, mission, purposes and awards of Rainy River Community College as listed in the executive summary.*
- *The Academic and Student Affairs Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees approve the request by Vermilion Community College to reaffirm its vision, mission, purposes and awards as listed in the executive summary.*

Motion carried.

5. Degree Credit Cap: Report

Session laws passed in 2007-2009 set caps on the number of credits for degrees in the system. The maximum number of credits required for a baccalaureate degree was set at 120 credits and for an associate degree at 60 credits. The law permits the Board of Trustees to grant waivers for specific degree programs in which industry or professional accreditation standards require a greater number of credits.

As of August 1, 2011, the system offered a total of 4,248 academic programs and of that number 4,014 programs (94 percent) were within credit length limits. The remaining 234 system programs (6 percent) exceeded credit length limits, but will be come into compliance by June 29, 2012.

Twenty-five waiver applications have been submitted. Of that number, 12 applications have been approved, one was withdrawn and 12 are under review.

The Degree Credit Cap Report has been sent to the Legislature as required by statute.

6. Students First Update

Presenter:

Mike Lopez, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
Jonathan Eichten, Students First Director

Over the past few years, the system has been engaged in initiatives to improve students' experiences through the Students First initiative. The Graduation Planner is one project which is intended to provide students with an easy-to-use online tool that enables them to plot out their academic program, make changes along the way or try out different scenarios.

The graduation planning tool software update was received and installed in July. During the months of August and September, two campuses, North Hennepin Community College and Minnesota State University, Mankato, piloted the software.

Several concerns surfaced during the testing period:

- To adequately maintain the tool, campuses would need additional staffing and that may be difficult during times of tight budgets.
- Many students enroll in one or more courses in developmental education. While the software is able to handle very simplistic curriculum models of developmental education, the system has varied and very complex models of developmental education that the software is unable to support.
- Many students pursue both a major and a minor or are in multiple programs and it was found that the software is unable to provide a singular audit against the student's plan. Students would have to track multiple "roadmaps" which are prone to error and contrary to the project goal of providing a clear path to graduation.
- Many students have one or more exceptions to their major or program, such as courses exempted due to military experience or credit for prior learning. The software is able to consider these exemptions in the student plan only if the student had the exception approved prior to creating the plan. This could result in a student registering for courses that they don't need.
- Students expect technology to be fast. The overall performance was of great concern since in the Minnesota State University, Mankato pilot, the response time was on average three minutes when opening a roadmap.

Following the pilot testing, an assessment report was placed on the Students First website for review in October. Several groups, including a Students First Graduation Planner working group, student leaders and the Leadership Council,

reviewed and discussed the report. It was agreed that the system and its students would not receive an adequate return on investment with this software.

Students First Director Eichten said the system is still committed to the original goal of developing an academic planning tool for students that can respond to the diversity of needs in a dynamic environment.

Possible solutions which will be further developed and explored with the Leadership Council and other stakeholders are:

- Enhance the Degree Audit and Reporting Systems (DARS/u.achieve) with planning tools to enable students to:
 - Explore “what if scenarios” with majors/programs;
 - Enter planned courses into DARS/u.achieve so that students can create a customized academic plan;
 - Run a report that reflects their customized academic plan that includes transfer courses, completed courses and planned courses, by term;
 - Explore how to transfer options that could lead to a university degree.
- Explore connections to the GPS LifePlan to support student advising;
- Create an academic report that reflects students; future planned courses that can be used by faculty and administrators to improve curricular planning;
- Building on the GradUate Initiative that encourages degree completion.

Associate Vice Chancellor López said enhancements and development work will not begin until sometime after February 1 because the Information Technology Services puts a moratorium on campus deployment of new technology until after the start of a new semester.

Trustee Englund said he has used Graduation Planner and found it to be a great tool. He said the system should keep simplicity and the end user in mind during the development of its graduation planning tools.

The meeting adjourned at 2:48 pm
Respectfully submitted,
Margie Takash, Recorder