

**MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
JANUARY 17, 2012**

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

Other Board Members Present: Trustees Brett Anderson, Cheryl Dickson, Phil Krinkie, Dan McElroy, Scott Thiss and Michael Vekich.

Leadership Council Committee Co-Chairs Present: Senior Associate Vice Chancellor Leslie Mercer and Presidents Cecilia Cervantes and Earl Potter.

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Academic and Student Affairs Committee held a meeting on January 17, 2012 at Wells Fargo Place, 4th Floor, Board Room, 30 East 7th Street in St. Paul. Chair Rice called the meeting to order at 10:52 am.

1. Minutes of November 15, 2011

The minutes from November 15, 2011 Academic and Student Affairs Committee were approved as written.

2. Academic and Student Affairs Update – Senior Associate Vice Chancellor Leslie Mercer

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities has been awarded a \$675,000 grant from the Joyce Foundation for the FastTRAC program. Minnesota was one of only two recipients of Joyce Foundation grants in this round of funding, Associate Vice Chancellor Mercer said.

FastTRAC is a partnership of colleges, adult basic education, workforce development and community organizations that focuses on helping more adults enter and succeed in post-secondary education. The goal is to train adults for higher-paying jobs or allow them to return for more education that builds on their previous work in the classroom and the workplace.

Staff will give Board members a report on FastTRAC in the future, Associate Vice Chancellor Mercer said.

3. Report to the Legislature on Transfer

Legislation passed in 2010 requires the Board to develop and to implement a plan to improve credit transfer within the system and submit an annual report to the

Legislature detailing activities that are helping achieve that goal. The Board reviewed a draft of the report which is due to the Legislature on Feb. 1, 2012.

The report offers four primary conclusions:

- Successful credit transfer is a major priority for the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees and will be tracked by a transfer measure on the Accountability Dashboard, as well as by annual reports on transfer.
- The system has implemented almost all of the best practices in transfer identified in higher education literature and is recognized nationally as a leader in the area of transfer.
- A study conducted by the system's Office of Internal Auditing, in conjunction with the statewide student associations, concluded that 91 percent of students who transfer within the system do so successfully.
- The system's Smart Transfer Plan was designed to address the issues leading to the 9 percent of transfer problems identified by the Internal Auditor's study, as well as other issues identified by students. The plan is on its way to full implementation.

The Smart Transfer Plan requires enhanced information on transfer and the appeal process be offered to students. Improved training for all staff involved with credit transfer will be implemented. The plan also requires institutions to review discrepancies in transfer processes and devise methods to improve the uniform treatment of credit transfer. The plan makes the institutions, not the students, responsible for providing documentation for course equivalency determinations.

Finally, the Smart Transfer Plan and new Board policies now require system-wide transfer information be posted on college and university websites.

Trustee Englund said while the system's efforts to improve the transfer process are encouraging, he questioned if the 91 percent success rate stated in the report is accurate. He said he personally has had problems with the transfer process, as have other students who have spoken with him. He said he believes the system still has work to do to make the processes better.

Associate Vice Chancellor Mike López said the 91 percent figure is drawn from a sample of students who transferred credits during Fiscal Year 2010. It involved students from all disciplines.

In the past, the transfer appeals process has been laborious, for students as well as staff, Trustee Englund said. It would be good if the process could be improved and made easier for all involved, he added.

Trustee Anderson agreed that the system needs to continue to work on improving transfer. Since transfer is one of the biggest customer service processes the system has, there should be more effort to ensure it is successful for students.

Associate Vice Chancellor López said the system has made policy changes and taken other steps to streamline the transfer processes to make them easier. There have been policy changes to make it easier for institutions to compare courses for equivalency.

Trustee Oliveira asked if a common course numbering system would help with transfer.

Associate Vice Chancellor López said use of a common course numbering system already has been studied two times. Those studies showed that implementing a common course system would be an enormous amount of work, as well as being expensive.

Students are better served by the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum than a common course numbering system because it allows students many more course combinations for successful transfer, Associate Vice Chancellor Mercer said. The Minnesota Transfer Curriculum is an outcome-based system which was developed collaboratively by all two- and four-year public colleges and universities in the state to help students transfer their work in general education.

Trustee Benson asked if the system is able to track how successful students are at having coursework transfer to institutions outside the system.

President Potter said the cost and staff time needed to gather that information would be substantial. In addition, that information would be of limited benefit to the system since private institutions often have different missions, philosophies and student transfer processes, he said.

Trustees Van Houten and Krinke said the system could do a better job of marketing transfer to potential students, letting them know that they can easily transfer coursework from one college or university to other institutions in the system, as well as to the University of Minnesota.

Chancellor Rosenstone noted that transfers within the system are way up. The number of students transferring to state colleges increased by 44.5 percent from 2008 to 2011, while the number of students transferring to state universities increased by about 20 percent during that same time. The report also shows that there are as many students coming to system colleges and universities from the University of Minnesota as there are students transferring to the University of Minnesota.

Transfer will continue to be a top priority for him, the Board, the Legislature and students, Chancellor Rosenstone said. He said the system will strive to ensure that

every student who begins in the system will be able to successfully complete a degree in a different institution if he or she so chooses.

4. Bush Foundation Teacher Education Partnership

Presenters:

Earl Potter, President, St. Cloud State University

Judith Ramaley, President, Winona State University

Teri Walseth, Dean of the College of Education, Minnesota State University Moorhead

Jean Haar, Interim Dean of the College of Education, Minnesota State University, Mankato

The Bush Foundation has committed \$40 million over 10 years to produce highly qualified and effective teachers. Four of the system's universities – Minnesota State University, Mankato, Minnesota State University Moorhead, St. Cloud State University and Winona State University – are among 14 institutions in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota to receive funding for this effort. Members from each of these institutions came before the Board to offer an update on how this partnership is transforming teacher education programs.

The Bush project is called Network for Excellence in Teaching (NExT), a 10-year commitment to produce a cadre of highly-effective teachers who will be able to dramatically improve student performance and eliminate disparities among diverse student groups. It is based on five key strategies:

- Recruit those most likely to succeed as effective teachers;
- Prepare those students to be effective educators;
- Place students in schools led by leaders who will support them in those first critical years in the classroom;
- Support the new teachers on an ongoing basis after they graduate;
- Measure the effectiveness of their graduates through value-added assessment and other means.

St. Cloud State University President Potter said teacher education reform in the system was inevitable, but it would not have taken off as quickly or in as collaborative fashion without the Bush Foundation partnership. Representatives from each of the four universities participating were asked to sign agreements that included a promise to change the way students are recruited, the way students are prepared to be teachers, as well as the way those students are supported in the classroom to guarantee their ultimate effectiveness in the classroom.

Winona State University is approaching the Bush Foundation partnership as a way to continuously improve Birth-to-Grade 12 student learning in the 21st century schools, President Ramaley said. Partnerships with B-12 professionals are central to how they are planning, implementing, leading and establishing accountabilities for their teacher-education program.

The partnerships are already showing results, she said. K-12 institutions in her region have begun to consider ways to transform and enhance elementary and secondary learning environments. For example, the La Crescent school district is rethinking the entire high school experience, while the Austin school district is rethinking middle school. Winona is rethinking elementary school and Rochester's new superintendent is looking at ways to create community schools, which would strengthen the links between academic learning and health and social services, youth services and community development.

Mankato College of Education Interim Dean Jean Haar also spoke on how the funding from the Bush Foundation has allowed them to strengthen the partnerships they have with K-12 schools.

The program's vision involves two years of school experience, with nearly all teacher preparation instruction in the schools taught by teams of master teachers and university faculty and focused on the real instructional needs of K-12. Student teachers co-teach beside veteran teachers in the classroom which is a phenomenal way to create effective future educators, she said.

To help with their promise of producing effective teachers, the university is following graduates with three years of professional development and mentoring services.

Minnesota State University Moorhead's involvement with the Bush Foundation grant is a bit different since they have teamed up to form the Valley Partnership with North Dakota State University and Valley City State University, 60 miles to the west of Moorhead. Teri Walseth, Dean at the College of Education at Minnesota State University Moorhead, said this partnership allows them to work collaboratively, while still retaining separate identifies and unique specialties to prepare teachers in their region.

The partnership allows them to capitalize on each other's resources and strengths, she said. For example, they utilize NDSU's statistician to work with data and they are working jointly on a marketing plan, which includes a recruitment video. This partnership is allowing them to share the workload, as well as expenses.

At Minnesota State University Moorhead, the teacher education transformation has the goal of producing over 1,000 elementary education pre-service teachers, many of whom will remain in the region. They have also infused the majority of special education standards into the coursework so that candidates will be able to add a special education licensure with ease.

Trustee Sundin asked if the universities are adjusting their education program admissions requirements because of changes in the economy and employment opportunities for teachers.

Hank Rubin, Winona State University Dean of Education, said they just received teacher employment data for the three-state region. While the labor market outlook probably will not affect their admission requirements, it will likely cause them to adjust their admission ratios and advising policies.

President Ramaley added that her university already has high admission standards. They want to focus their efforts on encouraging education students to consider disciplines in which there will be employment opportunities or social need.

Trustee Renier said he is concerned that unless the status of the teaching profession is elevated in society, there will continue to be problems with recruiting the brightest students and retaining the most effective classroom teachers.

University representatives were asked how the teacher education reform measures are affecting students who were already enrolled in teacher education programs.

Interim Dean Haar said her university staff is working with existing students to incorporate them into the reformed educational preparation. Since they believe the new initiatives are so important to creating effective teachers, they want all of their students to be exposed to them, she said.

The meeting adjourned at 12:20 pm
Respectfully submitted,
Margie Takash, Recorder