

**MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
NOVEMBER 20, 2013**

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**Academic and Student Affairs Committee Members Present:** Chair Margaret Anderson Kelliher; Trustees Duane Benson, Dawn Erlandson, Alfredo Oliveira and Louise Sundin.

**Academic and Student Affairs Committee Members Absent:** Cheryl Dickson and Maria Peluso.

**Other Board Members Present:** Trustees Ann Anaya, Alexander Cirillo, Clarence Hightower, Phil Krinkie, Thomas Renier, Elise Ristau, and Michael Vekich.

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Academic and Student Affairs Committee held a meeting on November 20, 2013 at Wells Fargo Place, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Board Room, 30 East 7<sup>th</sup> Street in St. Paul. Academic and Student Affairs Committee Chair Anderson Kelliher called the session to order at 10:02 am.

**1. Update on the Itasca Workforce Alignment Group**

**Presenters:**

Scott Peterson, Executive Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer, The Schwan Food Company, and Co-Chair of the Itasca Project Workforce Alignment Team.

Jaime Simonsen, Interim System Director, Workforce Development

The Itasca Project is an employer-led alliance focused on finding new and better ways to address regional issues that impact the state's future competitiveness and quality of life. Participants include large and small employers, public and private institutions of higher education, government and community organizations.

The Itasca Project's priorities are to:

- Generate high quality job growth
- Improve the region's educational system
- Advance a comprehensive and aligned transportation system
- Reduce socioeconomic disparities.

A higher education task force was convened by the Itasca Project to identify strategies that can be implemented to drive long-term, sustainable economic growth and prosperity. This task force aligned around several strategic priorities, including aligning academic offerings with workforce needs and graduating more students.

Scott Peterson presented on the Workforce Alignment Group. This group, which is chaired by him and Chancellor Rosenstone, is a cross-sector partnership of leaders from the employer, higher education, foundation, government and nonprofit sectors – all who have a vested interest in workforce issues. The group is focusing on the alignment between what students and job seekers are learning in post-secondary education and what employers need in the Minnesota economy.

The state has a growing need for an educated workforce, Mr. Peterson said. By 2020, 74 percent of Minnesota jobs will require post-secondary education. The Workforce Alignment Group is looking at ways to guide more post-secondary students to pursuing academic programs that align their interests with high-demand, high-growth jobs. The group wants to ensure academic programs are turning out the right number of graduates with the right capabilities to meet Minnesota's future workforce needs.

Over the last few months, the group has been gathering insight into what stakeholders need to enable workforce alignment. More than 500 stakeholders have been involved in the needs assessment so far, including employers, academic leaders, workforce developers, career counselors, foundations and government entities.

After gathering the stakeholders' input, the Workforce Alignment Group will be using a pilot approach to determine which needs can be met by existing tools and which needs require new tools or approaches. The pilot will involve a diverse set of employers and academic institutions, Mr. Peterson said.

Funds to run the pilots have been secured from a range of foundations which have a strong interest in higher education and funds from the system office. An external evaluation team also is in place and an anchor organization is being identified. This anchor organization will ensure sustainability and momentum of this effort, Mr. Peterson said, and should be operational by July 1, 2014.

The Workforce Alignment Group's overall goals are:

- Having the most effective human capital pipeline from higher education to employment in the country
- Ensuring more students are on track to educational paths that lead to jobs in high demand
- Creating an efficient deployment of their education resources
- Reducing the skills gap and in time required to fill job openings
- Responding faster to changes in labor market
- Enhancing business growth in the state.

Chancellor Rosenstone said the efforts of the Workforce Alignment Group will have a tremendous impact on the state's economy.

The meeting adjourned at 11:02 pm  
Respectfully submitted,  
Margie Takash, Recorder