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Chairman Jay Cowles
Minnesota State Board of Trustees
30 East 7th Street
St. Paul, MN 55101
June 15, 2020

Chair Cowles, Trustee, Chancellor Malhotra;

COVID-19 continues to dominate our work and our concerns for our campuses, the MinnState System, and higher education in general. The well-being of our students is always a top priority, but the threat of this highly contagious and deadly virus is challenging all of us to rethink how we interact and every aspect of how our campuses function. Such an undertaking requires steadfast leadership, effective communication, and unprecedented collaboration. Our collective attempts to mitigate the risks related to COVID-19 since February to the present has required and continues to require on-going understanding, decisions, and actions; most of the past 5 months has been a whirlwind of activity. Therefore, it is important we pause periodically and acknowledge our appreciation of others. I would like to personally thank Chancellor Malhotra for his recent decisions to require mandatory screening before one is allowed on our campuses and his System-wide policy requiring individuals to wear a mask. In addition, I commend the Chancellor for standing with our International Students in opposition to federal guidelines that would have stripped these students of their visas and seriously disrupted their pursuit of an education. This was a proud moment for MinnState, our advocacy and that of other higher education systems across the country had a genuine impact – Thank you Devinder!

In this moment, I would also like to take the opportunity to recognize and acknowledge my appreciation for the leadership of all the bargaining units in the MinnState System, their investment in our employees, students, campus facilities, and the communities we serve is profound and unwavering. It is with these people that our campuses will open in the fall and we will continue to successfully educate and serve our students!

Lastly, it is with selfish sadness to see Dr. Clyde Pickett leave the MinnState System. He is a consummate professional, a dedicated worker, and a strong advocate for equity and inclusion. In getting to know Clyde, he is smart, flexible, visionary, and a he has been a tremendous asset to our System, but most of all, I have enjoyed every interaction I have had with him during my term as IFO President. It is easy to see why the University of Pittsburg would hire him and I am sure his family will appreciate having him closer to home. I wish him the best and I want him to know, he will be missed here in Minnesota. Take care Clyde.

Respectfully submitted,

Brent Jeffers
President
Inter Faculty Organization