

## Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

### Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

November 18, 2020

Present: Chair Jay Cowles, Vice Chair Roger Moe, Trustees Asani Ajogun, Alex Cirillo, Dawn Erlandson, Jerry Janezich, Javier Morillo, April Nishimura, Oballa Oballa, Rudy Rodriguez, Kathy Sheran, George Soule, Cheryl Tefer, Michael Vekich, and Chancellor Devinder Malhotra.

Absent: Trustee Ahmitara Alwal

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#### Call to Order

Chair Jay Cowles called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm. He welcomed all trustees, presenters, participants and the audience statewide.

Representatives of the bargaining units and student associations were requested to submit their written testimony in advance of the meeting. All testimony was distributed to trustees for their review yesterday evening.

Chair Cowles conducted a roll call of the trustees who were participating by Zoom.

#### Chancellor Devinder Malhotra Remarks

To say that the past two days have been extremely full is easily an understatement. We shared and discussed topics that are important not only to our colleges and universities but to the very students that we educate and the communities we serve.

#### FY2021 Chancellor/System Office Workplan

I have shared with the board the document entitled: *FY2021 chancellor and system office workplan*.

The workplan is divided into two key priority areas: Equity 2030 work and Enterprise Activities. This is not a comprehensive list of all the collective work that is being undertaken at the system office nor all the activities where I am engaged, but it is reflective of the top priorities as we move towards our shared Equity 2030 goal and shoring up our organization to be programmatically and financially sustainable.

Equity 2030 was endorsed by this Board in June 2019. It is evident that the educational equity gaps will be eliminated by the work that is begin undertaken and will be accelerated at our colleges and universities. Each campus serves a unique set of students that will need an individualized and personalized educational experience. There is no silver bullet or secret code to do this work. And that is why we must engage in this work together – as collective partners – as a system. The power of a system is our ability to draw on the strengths and lessons learned from each other to maximize the potential to serve students. We will truly become a system when we ensure the success

of each and every student no matter where they are enrolled.

Equity 2030 has provided our campuses and the system office with a singular focus and a unifying priority lens by which all our work must be measured.

The workplan I shared with you identifies system level activities and our collective work which will either increase the effectiveness or the impact of the great work at our colleges and universities.

As I've shared before, the need to do this work has only been heightened by the current pandemic – it has strengthened our resolve that this is not only the right thing to do but the right time for this singular focus.

### **COVID Update**

We are all well aware of the rising number of cases in our communities and the increased steps that the state is taking to stabilize the numbers so that our healthcare professionals can serve those most impacted by the pandemic.

As I've said many times to this board – there is no playbook of how to lead during times like these. But what we can do is to stay grounded in the two principles that have guided us for the past eight months:

- To help our students succeed and to cross the finish line, and
- To keep at the forefront, the safety of our students, faculty, and staff

As we watch the national news and see changes yet again occurring at higher education institutions as we near the end of the fall semester, I want to reassure the board that each of our institutions is taking into account the regional context of where they are situated – the diversity of the students they serve and the programmatic make-up of what they offer – and the advice of their local public health authorities.

On Monday I shared with presidents the following guidance as they continue to engage in conversations with their communities about how best to complete the semester:

- Working with faculty and staff, identify if there are additional components for in-person classes that can be moved online, and
- Where in-person components must still occur, campuses should deploy even more stringent mitigation strategies.

None of this is easy on any of us. The increased anxiety and stress on each and every one of us is very real. As I look back on the amazing work that has been done by all of us to get us to this point, we truly are a resilient bunch.

I also want to emphasize that COVID has disproportionately impacted students from marginalized and oppressed communities and further exacerbates the educational equity gaps. The successful navigation of the pandemic and effectively mitigating its adverse impact is the most consequential Equity 2030 strategy. Given the role technology has played in dealing with the pandemic the NextGen recommendation you will consider today is another important catalyst for sustainability in post-COVID era.

Thus, I find a commonality in what I have shared – whether it is Equity 2030 or addressing COVID, we must do this work collectively and as a community.

Since I will not address this board again until a new year is upon us, I wish our trustees, our students, faculty, and staff, good health and happiness and time to recharge.

### **Chair's Report, Jay Cowles**

This month's meeting schedule was substantial both in time allotted and the importance of topics. As a board, we discussed four critical items for the system: Guided Learning Pathways which provides a framework for the student success at our colleges and universities, FY2021 capital bonding recommendation, FY2022-23 biennial budget request, and a revised finance plan and vendor contract for the NextGen ERP project. We will soon vote on final approval of these items, all of which are critical elements for the future of our colleges and universities and their sustainability in the coming year; the success of our students, and the priority placed on ongoing equity and affordability work. I thank my fellow trustees for their attention and consideration on these matters.

We will soon vote on final approval of these items all of which are critical elements for the future of our colleges and universities and their sustainability in the coming years. The success of our students and the priority placed on ongoing equity and affordability work. I thank my fellow trustees for their attention and consideration on these matters. And thanks to our many partners throughout the system bargaining units and student associations for their thoughtful comments, their suggestions and their encouragement.

We started off this month's meeting with a joint meeting with the Minnesota State Leadership Council. Over the past few years I have enjoyed the opportunity for informal conversations with presidents that allow trustees to learn about what is going on at their campuses.

In small discussion groups made up of trustees, presidents and members of the Chancellor's cabinet, we heard firsthand from our presidents about the important work at their campuses to support student basic needs. That was the focus of our discussions this year and we heard in our breakout sessions pensive testimony focusing on mental health pressures, food insecurities, housing insecurity, and broadband and internet gaps. We were impressed with the Innovation and creativity and commitment that was

being shown on our campuses as each campus uniquely addresses these issues. I want to thank again the presidents in particular for spending time with us.

I would also like to report out on the Chancellor Performance Review Committee, which met in closed session on November 12<sup>th</sup>. The committee received an update from the Chancellor on this fiscal year FY2021 work plan. All trustees received a copy of this earlier this week. It will also be posted to the Board website. I want to convey my appreciation for the Chancellor's continued focus on Equity 2030 and on finding new and better ways to support the good work occurring on our campuses. Chancellor has the board's unwavering support as he continues to lead the system in tackling tough issues. We look forward to an update on this work as well in February.

Lastly, I would like to recognize Trustee Oballa who was recently elected to serve as city council member for the City of Austin Minnesota this election marks an historic moment in Austin's history as he is the first refugee and first person of color to be elected to council. Congratulations Trustee Oballa on this remarkable achievement.

### **Consent Agenda**

Chair Cowles asked if anyone wanted to remove an item from the Consent Agenda. No items were removed.

A roll call vote was conducted, and motion carried by a vote of thirteen in favor (Chair Cowles, Vice Chair Moe, Trustees Ajogun, Cirillo, Janezich, Morillo, Nishimura, Oballa, Sheran, Soule, Tefer, Vekich) and one abstention (Trustee Erlandson). The Consent Agenda was adopted. Trustee Rodriguez was not present at the time of this vote.

### **Consent Agenda**

- 1. Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting, October 21, 2020**
- 2. The Minnesota State *Guided Learning Pathways* Framework**
- 3. Review Audit Results and Approve Release of Audited Financial Statements and Federal Student Financial Aid Audit**
- 4. Review and Approve Committee Charter for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee**
- 5. Capital Bonding Update and 2021 Recommendation and Approval**
- 6. Contracts Exceeding \$1 Million:**
  - a. Contract Extension for University Heights Student Housing – Bemidji State University**
  - b. Lease Amendment: Metropolitan State University and 1380 Energy Park**
- 7. NextGen Phase 2, including Revised Finance Plan**
- 8. NextGen Vendor Contract Approval**

### **Board Standing Committee Reports**

**Human Resources Committee, Michael Vekich, Chair**

Committee Chair Vekich reported on the appointment of Interim President for Northland Community and Technical College. The committee voted to approve the following recommendation:

*The Board of Trustees, upon the recommendation of Chancellor Malhotra, appoints Dr. Shannon Jesme as Interim President of Northland Community and Technical College, effective January 1, 2021, subject to the completion of an employment agreement. The board authorizes the chancellor, in consultation with the chair of the Board and chair of the Human Resources Committee, to negotiate and execute an employment agreement in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Personnel Plan for Administrators.*

A motion from a board committee does not require a second. A roll call vote was conducted, and motion passed unanimously.

Interim President Dr. Shannon Jesme expressed her appreciation and thanks for the opportunity.

#### **Committee of the Whole, Jay Cowles, Chair**

Chair Cowles shared that the Committee of the Whole meeting included an update on the NextGen project, including a review of Phase 1 work; a revised Phase 2 timeline and finance plan; and lastly a review of the RFP process and final vendor selection. The Board voted on and has approved the recommendations brought forward by the Chancellor and his team for Phase 2 timeline and finance plan and vendor contract approval.

#### **Academic and Student Affairs Committee, Cheryl Tefer, Chair**

Committee Chair Tefer reported that the committee approved the minutes from the October meeting as published.

The committee also had a first reading of the following proposed policy amendments:

- Proposed Amendment to Board Policy 2.1 Campus Student Associations
- Proposed Amendment to Board Policy 3.1 Student Rights and Responsibilities
- Proposed Amendment to the Board Policy 3.6 Student Conduct

A presentation was given by Senior Vice Chancellor Ron Anderson titled The Minnesota State *Guided Learning Pathways* Framework. He presented with Gail O’Kane, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs at Minneapolis College and Dan Gregory, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs at St. Cloud State University. The committee unanimously recommended that the Board adopt Guided Learning Pathways as Minnesota States student success framework and to charge the Chancellor and Leadership Council with its implementation.

#### **Audit Committee, George Soule, Chair**

Committee Chair Soule reported that the Audit Committee received a report from Eric Wion,

Executive Director of Internal Audit, partners at CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP, and Vice Chancellor Maki on recently completed financial statement audits and Federal Student Financial Aid Audit. The committee voted unanimously to recommend that the Board approve the release of these audits.

**Joint Meeting: Audit and Human Resources Committees, Co-Chairs George Soule and Michael Vekich**

Committee Chair Soule gave an update on the Human Resources Transactional Service Model project review. He explained that there were some issues that require attention and work. Vice Chancellor Davis said that they will continue to work on stabilization and plan to return to the board with an updated report on the project in May or June of 2021.

**Outreach & Engagement Committee, Dawn Erlandson, Chair**

Committee Chair Erlandson reported that Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, Noelle Hawton provided background and overview of a proposed amendment to Policy 3.23 Naming Colleges and Universities. The Committee voted to suspend the rules to allow the committee to consider for approval an item requiring two readings. The committee then voted unanimously to approve the proposed amendment and now brings it to the full board for consideration. The recommendation is as follows:

*Board Policy 3.23 Naming Colleges and Universities was adopted and implemented by the Board of Trustees in October 1994. The policy was reviewed as part of the 5-year review cycle pursuant to Board Policy 1A.1 Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Organization and Administration, Part 6, Subpart H, Periodic review. The proposed amendment updates Part 2, Subpart B regarding the inclusion of an identifier name and the system affiliation identifier. The new writing and formatting styles were also applied.*

Chair Cowles asked for a motion to suspend the rules to allow approval of a policy amendment after the first reading that is not marked for action on the agenda. There was a motion to suspend the rules by Trustee Cirillo with a second by Trustee Morillo. Roll call vote was taken and motion to suspend the rules passed unanimously.

Chair Cowles motioned to approve the proposed amendment to Board Policy 3.23 Naming Colleges and Universities. Roll call vote was taken and proposed amendment passed unanimously.

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, Rudy Rodriguez, Chair**

Committee Chair Rodriguez presented an overview of the committee charter for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. After working for a few months to update the charter and plan, the committee voted to recommend the Board approve the charter and it was granted on the Consent Agenda.

**Facilities Committee, Jerry Janezich, Chair**

Committee Chair Janezich reported that the Lease Amendment for Metropolitan State University and 1380 Energy Park and the Capital Bonding Update and 2021 Recommendation were up for discussion and the committee voted to recommend board approval of both items.

**Finance Committee, Roger Moe, Chair**

Committee Chair Moe reported that in addition to the October meeting minutes they discussed the two contracts exceeding \$1M: Contract Extension for University Heights Student Housing-Bemidji State University; and Lease Amendment: Metropolitan State University and 1380 Energy Park.

The committee also had a second reading of the FY2022-2023 Biennial Budget Request and voted to recommend approval to the Board. Committee Chair Moe shared the recommendation as follows:

*The FY2022-FY2023 legislative request strengthens the state's commitment to inclusive excellence and ensuring our students receive an extraordinary, affordable, and accessible education. The Board of Trustees approves the FY2022-FY2023 biennial budget request in the amount of \$813,034,000 in FY2022 and \$832,034,000 in FY2023 for a total of \$1,645,068,000.*

*The Board of Trustees has been granted the authority in state statute to govern and operate Minnesota State. The board, after full consultation with Minnesota State constituencies, will make final budget decisions, including setting tuition rates, at the conclusion of the legislative session.*

Chair Cowles noted that a motion from a board committee does not require a second. A roll call vote was conducted, and motion passed unanimously.

**Student Associations**

Student associations and bargaining units were invited to submit written testimony in lieu of the opportunity to address the Board in person. The testimony was distributed to Trustees for their review yesterday and has also been posted to the Board website under the meeting materials link. Written testimony for student associations was submitted by Lead MN President Priscilla Mayowa.

### **Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Bargaining Units**

Written testimony was submitted by the following bargaining units: AFSCME, Jennifer Erwin, President; Inter Faculty Organization, Brent Jeffers, President; Minnesota State College Faculty, Matt Williams, President; and Minnesota State University Association of Administrative and Service Faculty, Tracy Rahim, President.

### **Trustee Reports**

Trustee Erlandson referenced the letter from AFSCME saying that you are not required to wear facemasks on some of our campuses and that co-workers who are exposed to a staff member that tests positive are hearing it from others instead of their own supervisor. She asked if there is contract tracing that our counties and state are doing.

Chancellor Malhotra responded that we are in constant touch with our bargaining units and when there have been instances where they have pointed out some non-compliance, we reach out and work with all parties to make sure the compliance is followed. We follow the Minnesota Department of Health and local health authorities when reporting if someone tests positive. The requirement is that everyone needs to be wearing a mask on campus and if there is non-compliance it needs to be followed up on.

Chair Cowles and Trustee Sheran visited Riverland College a few weeks ago for the grand opening of their new trade and technical facilities on campus.

Trustee Tefer wanted it on record that she was impressed with the staff and support for everything that has gone on with Riverland grand opening.

Chancellor Malhotra also highlighted the recent virtual ribbon cutting ceremony at Bemidji State University for the new Hagg-Sauer building. There was also a celebration on a project completion at Normandale College.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for January 26-27, 2021

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 2:24 pm.