

**MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Agenda Item Summary Sheet

Committee: Academic and Student Affairs **Date of Meeting:** April 20, 2010

Agenda Item: Follow-up to OLA Evaluation of the System Office

Proposed Policy Change Approvals Required by Policy Other Approvals Monitoring

Information

Cite Policy Requirement, or explain why item is on the Board Agenda

The Chair of the Board of Trustees requested that each Committee review Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA) areas of concern under their purview.

Scheduled Presenters:

Linda L. Baer, Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs

Background Information:

- The evaluation was requested by the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees Chair, and it was authorized by the Legislative Audit Commission.
- The OLA report was presented to the Board of Trustees Audit Committee and a subsequent memo from Board Chair David Olson charged each committee with a review and possible actions in the respective areas of concern, six of which are under the purview of this committee.
- The OLA areas of concern for Academic and Student Affairs were reviewed by the committee in March with agreement to address the following three areas of concern at the April meeting.
 - Impact and cost-effectiveness of online instruction
 - Oversight of customized training and continuing education
 - Oversight of specialized training in firefighting and emergency medical services
- The primary focus of the presentation and discussion will be online learning which has the most extensive policy and practice implications among the three areas of concern.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
*INFORMATION ITEM***

Follow-up to OLA Evaluation of the System Office

BACKGROUND

The Academic and Student Affairs work plan for responding to the OLA evaluation includes consideration of the following three areas at the April meeting:

- Impact and cost-effectiveness of online instruction
- Oversight of customized training and continuing education
- Oversight of specialized training in firefighting and emergency medical services

The OLA evaluation includes a number of findings in these three areas primarily emanating from a survey of system presidents. The survey feedback provides opportunities for continuous improvement in the services provided to system institutions. It also highlights significant issues related to the value and appropriateness of centralizing some functions and services. The April meeting of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee will include an overview of the three areas and action steps that are or will be undertaken to address each area of concern.

Overview of Areas of Concern for Academic and Student Affairs

<i>Impact and cost-effectiveness of online instruction</i>		
Issues Raised and Related Quotes from OLA Report	Background Information and Activities in the Area of Concern	Recommended Activities for ASA Workplan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A majority of MnSCU presidents are satisfied with the system office’s activities supporting online education, but the overall impact of Minnesota Online has not yet been systematically assessed.” (p. 63) • “MnSCU’s online education services have expanded significantly but with little information on educational outcomes. It is important to consider whether online courses and services are providing a high-quality educational experience for students.” (p. 64) • “So far, the system office has not developed performance benchmarks or conducted impact studies. The system office has contracted in recent years for an annual survey of MnSCU’s online learners. Past surveys have suggested that MnSCU’s online users have lower levels of satisfaction with online services than online users nationally.” (p. 64) • “Some campus officials commented that they do not perceive a strong return on investment for Minnesota Online’s per-credit fees, and others said they would like additional assistance in developing online courses.” (p. 64) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measuring performance is integrated into the FY2010-FY2012 Online Action Plan. Several key success measures are being developed with Research and Planning. This includes a dashboard of student success measures for online courses. • Minnesota Online continues to support the campus surveys of online learners. As noted, surveys have suggested that MnSCU’s online users have lower levels of satisfaction. However, results also suggest that satisfaction of MnSCU online learners is higher than classroom learners nationally. • General oversight of Minnesota Online is provided by the Minnesota Online Council, an advisory group to the Sr. Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs comprised of college, university, student and faculty representatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure developed for online course success rates (sharing with campuses by June 2010) • Begun development of measure on longitudinal success rates of online students (complete fall 2010) • Conducting additional analysis on the survey results in relation to other measures. Integrating survey results into online dashboard. Pursuing large scale pilot test of the new online version of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement in 2011. • Assess current approach to delivering and supporting online in the system, including the impact of Minnesota Online. (August 2010)

Other Key Questions

1. How do we know we are getting good results?

2. Why reinvent online courses on every campus?

3. Why does it cost more?

- See responses above
 - Services and courses already exist on campuses: online courses and programs have been created as an extension of programs and services for classroom students; online services are also used by classroom students.
 - Collaboration is part of the Online Action Plan; Minnesota Online funds high demand programs developed jointly by institutions.
 - A biennial cost analysis was conducted for FY2009, results include: 1) Instructional costs for online courses appear to be comparable to costs for classroom courses; 2) Costs for activities other than instruction appear to be slightly higher for online courses/students than for classroom; 3) Determining the actual cost differences for activities other than instruction is difficult; 4) Additional tuition revenue is invested in critical technology and student support services required to deliver online education.
- Assess impact of adjusting the Allocation Framework to provide incentives for course sharing between institutions as a way to increase efficiencies.
 - Continue current practice of open RFPs for developing high demand collaborative online programs.
 - Continue biennial cost analysis.

Oversight of customized training and continuing education

<p align="center">Issues Raised and Related Quotes from OLA Report</p>	<p align="center">Background Information and Activities on the Area of Concern</p>	<p align="center">Recommended Activities for ASA Workplan</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The system office plays a limited role in oversight of customized training, and many institution presidents question the value of this system-level oversight.” (p.65) • “Customized training is an important MnSCU service to employers, but the role of the system office in this activity is not well defined.” (p. 65) • “...the Board of Trustees has not specifically mandated regulation or coordination of customized training programs, and it is unclear to us that the system office should employ staff to advocate on behalf of campuses’ customized training activities.” (p. 66) 	<p>The Office of the Chancellor provides the following system-level services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocates Fund 120: 98 percent is distributed to colleges and universities by formula or through grants and 2% is retained for systemwide coordination. • Serves on the Minnesota Jobs Skills Partnership board to advocate for competitive grant applications from system institutions. • Manages system-level communications with statewide business and industry associations and organizations. • Develops and coordinates marketing and public relations regarding services to business, including Web, print and telephone access. • Manages innovation grants to build curriculum to support collaboration and to create services for dislocated and underemployed workers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide system leadership in partnership with Continuing Education and Customized Training administrators through the newly appointed Business and Industry Outreach Council. • Strategic goals for continuing education and customized training include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue outreach efforts, develop additional external resources and support innovation. ▪ Manage selection of a vendor for a system-wide online registration and payment service by June 2010. ▪ Produce report on proposed performance measures to improve accountability and to benchmark services. ▪ Increase the number of on-line, non credit courses available to meet the needs of employers and workers through grant incentives from the CT/CE innovations fund.
<p align="center">Key Questions</p>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How can the system office provide value-added services for outreach and access to large state employers? 2. Does the system support ongoing and future development of collaboration across institutions in this area? 		

Oversight of specialized training in firefighting and emergency medical services

Issues Raised and Related Quotes from OLA Report	Background Information and Activities on the Area of Concern	Recommended Activities for ASA Workplan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Fire/EMS Center is a less essential part of the MnSCU system office than it once was, and the need for specialized oversight of firefighting and EMS training by the system office is unclear.” (p. 69) • “MnSCU’s use of the system office specialists to oversee firefighter training is an approach different for the one it uses in most academic program areas....some officials told us the Fire Center has little impact on training programs...” (p.69) • “The Fire/EMS Center serves as Minnesota’s official “point of contact” with the federal government for firefighter training. However, most states’ points of contact are in state fire marshal offices or other state agencies.” (p. 70) 	<p>The Fire/EMS/Safety Center provides the following system-level services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversees 12 fire and 17 emergency management programs statewide to ensure compliance with federal and state standards. Manages 9 train-the-trainer courses. • Provides oversight to ensure compliance with Governor’s Executive Order 07-14 that assigns emergency responsibilities to State agencies. • Provides training oversight and services to 3,000 first aid/CPR instructors across the state. • The system’s fire specialists assist local fire departments in securing federal grants. Since 2001, these specialists assisted 1,400 departments in securing \$100 million. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of center services to campuses will be completed by June, 2010 (including surveys of external and internal customers and evaluation meetings with program managers and campus administrators). • Agree upon the future role of the centralized fire service and emergency management education and determine if elements can be transferred to institution programs or discontinued. • Provide recommendations to senior vice chancellor of Academic and Student Affairs for review and implementation by June 2010.
<p style="text-align: center;">Key Questions</p>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What additional value is created by providing system oversight of fire, emergency and safety education and services in conjunction with current compliance efforts out of the Office of the Chancellor? 2. Is the knowledge of fire specialists of greater benefit to the system if the Center is located in the Office of the Chancellor or at a campus? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Management Analysis Division (MAD) report in 2006 concluded that firefighter and EMS training oversight is an essential service provided by the Center, and it is appropriately located in the Office of the Chancellor. • Sixty percent of the federal points of contact in the U.S. are part of a higher education institution or system. 	<p>04.08.10</p>