

**MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
November 18, 2009**

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Executive Committee Members Present: David Olson, Chair, Duane Benson, Ruth Grendahl, Thomas Renier, Christine Rice and Scott This

Executive Committee Members Absent: David Paskach

Other Members Present: Jacob Englund, Dan McElroy and James Van Houten

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees Executive Committee met at Wells Fargo Place, 30 7<sup>th</sup> Street E., 4th Floor, Board Room, Saint Paul, on Wednesday, November 18, 2009, at 2:40 p.m. Chair David Olson convened the meeting and announced that a quorum was present.

**(1) Minutes of September 9, 2009, Meeting**

The minutes of the Executive Committee meeting on September 9, 2009, were accepted as written.

**(2) FY 2010 First Quarter Board Operating Budget**

The report on the FY 2010 First Quarter Board Operating Budget was distributed. Trustee Scott This, Treasurer, reported that the Board's Operating Budget is \$215,500. As of September 30, 2009, \$27,067, or thirteen percent, had been disbursed, and \$126,748 had been encumbered. The balance was \$58,685. For the same period last year, sixteen percent of the budget of \$240,000 had been disbursed.

**(3) Retreat Follow-Up**

The committee discussed the Board's retreat that was at Rochester Community and Technical College on October 20 and 21. Vice Chair Ruth Grendahl commented that there was some frustration because of the lack of a clear outcome. Trustee James Van Houten commented that he believes that the system is on the verge of greatness, particularly with some of the ideas that were discussed, such as offering tuition at a lower price, the bridge from K-12 to higher education, and online learning as an answer to addressing needs in rural Minnesota. He added that if we put our resources behind these things, we are on the verge of greatness.

Chair Olson noted that the conversation was fine, but it was not an easy meeting to facilitate. Overall, members agreed it important to keep the issues that were identified on the forefront. Members also wanted the "System's Positioning Statements" to be included in future discussions.

Trustee Christine Rice distributed a proposal for Trustees to host "listening sessions." She explained that it would be helpful for the Board of Trustees to hear from stakeholders. Chair Olson has approved the feasibility of this. Trustees were struggling with their role at the retreat. The listening sessions would be a step toward defining ourselves. The Board would hear from students, townspeople and others. Trustee Duane Benson added that the stakeholders would be asked to respond to questions that would be sent in

advance. Trustee Thiss voiced concerns about the added costs of the listening sessions given limited resources and the Board's operating budget. Trustee Rice acknowledged the cost factor and added that should the committee agree to the listening sessions, she would work with staff to outline a budget for them.

Chancellor James McCormick noted that it took him months to visit all 54 campuses when he first arrived. He suggested that the Listening Sessions could be held on the campuses of the four presidents who are on the Ad Hoc Committee on System Planning – Minnesota State University Moorhead, Alexandria Technical College, Hennepin Technical College and Minnesota State University, Mankato. Trustee Rice thought this would be a reasonable approach.

Trustee Grendahl was supportive of the listening sessions. She added that the Board needs to get out on the campuses and that she felt a little embarrassed that the legislators go out and see the bonding projects and we do not. Trustee Dan McElroy also favored the listening sessions. He continued that the Ad Hoc Committee on System Planning could make them work, and perhaps they could be done during January and February. President Richard Davenport also supported the listening sessions. He recommended defining the questions that will be asked and to provide notice beforehand.

#### **(4) Leadership Council Comments**

President Davenport reported that the Leadership Council discussed the presidents' work plans and targets for their annual evaluations. They also spent considerable time on the Students First Initiative. Dr. John O'Brien has the confidence of the Leadership Council in leading this initiative. Presidents also discussed budget concerns and the importance of open communications.

#### **(5) Other**

Trustee Van Houten requested information about the presidential searches. Particularly, he wished for the Board to know when there were campus events for the finalists so that the Trustees could attend them. Trustee Grendahl noted that up to three trustees interview the finalists with the Chancellor and Vice Chancellor for Human Resources. The Chancellor makes the recommendation to the Board. Chancellor McCormick explained that the current interview process is such that only the Trustees who are interviewing the finalists receive their résumés. He suggested that the information could be provided to all of the Board members who can forward questions to the interview team, should they have any. Chair Olson asked Vice Chancellor Lori Lamb and General Counsel Gail Olson to think about legal issues for greater access to candidates beyond the search.

Chair Olson commented that the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce has been working on the rate change that Excel Energy filed, and it was successful in moving rates down. It will save the system about \$200,000 a year. Also, the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce is working with Minnesota State Colleges and Universities on a renewable energy contract.

#### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.