

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

**Agenda Item Summary Sheet**

**Committee:** Academic and Student Affairs      **Date of Meeting:** May 18, 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 May meeting.
  - System-wide academic planning and curriculum development.
  - Approvals of campus proposals to begin, revise, or close programs.
  - Faculty professional development.

**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 May meeting:

- System-wide academic planning and curriculum development,
- Approvals of campus proposals to begin, revise, or close programs, and
- Faculty professional development.

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 May 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.

**Follow-up to OLA Evaluation of the System Office  
Board of Trustees Academic and Student Affairs Committee**

**System-wide academic planning and curriculum development**

***Primary OLA Finding***

“Many campus officials have not been satisfied with the ASA Division’s efforts to foster ideas for new academic programs ... among campuses.” (p. 60)

***Current Activities***

The limited role of the Office of the Chancellor in program planning and curriculum development is primarily focused on Legislative and Board of Trustees priorities, such as:

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| a. Perkins                            | e. STEM                                      |
| b. Centers of Excellence              | f. Healthcare Education Industry Partnership |
| c. Farm and Small Business Management | g. Allied Health and Practical Nursing       |
| d. Biosciences and Renewable Energy   | h. AS Broad Field Degrees                    |

***Action Steps***

Support the following system-wide academic planning strategies-

1. Develop state or regional processes for identification and development of new professional and career and technical education programs serving key statewide or regional industries

**Approvals of campus proposals to begin, revise, or close programs**

***Primary OLA Finding***

- “The MnSCU system office has usually conducted reviews of new program proposals in a reasonable amount of time.” (p. 59)
- “Many campus officials have not been satisfied with the ASA Division’s efforts to....reduce program duplication among campuses.” (p. 60)

***Current Activities***

1. “Instances in which undergraduate program approval took longer than six weeks usually occurred because institutions did not initially provide all of the required information, or because concerns raised by other institutions about the proposals needed to be considered.” (p. 59-60)
2. The Office of the Chancellor processes over 1,000 program applications each year. Recent (2007) legislation, which limits programs to 60/120 credits, has increased the number of applications and support needed.

### ***Action Steps***

Reduce the time to approval through the following strategies-

1. Interface the program inventory with ISRS
2. Develop paperless workflow service for submission and review of program applications
3. Develop criteria and provide data on unnecessary program duplication to support campus program management and system-wide coordination
4. Develop state or regional processes for coordination of program closure to ensure access and responsiveness to a breadth of academic and technical program offerings

### **Faculty professional development**

#### ***Primary OLA Finding***

“The system office has played a reasonable role in promoting the professional development of faculty members, but this role should be re-evaluated as budgets grow tighter.” (p. 61)

#### ***Current Activities***

There are two primary reasons for a central faculty and instructional development office.

1. Leveraged Resources. Many of our smaller colleges and universities simply do not have all the staffing, expertise, or resources to do on their own what we can help them do. CTL supports teams of faculty and academic administrators to deliver programs locally. CTL also features the *best practices of the best instructors* and scholars at workshops, conferences, forums.
2. Strategic Vision and Focus. Individual campuses do not develop on their own a larger vision of faculty development for systemwide impact. CTL’s central status allows us both to drive and support specific programs (e.g., teaching online) to meet the needs of the state, the Board, and the Chancellor.

#### ***Action Steps***

1. Evaluate system-office faculty development activities and 2011-15 work plan to ensure system priorities are productively addressed. Focus on student learning outcomes and key teaching strategies and methods to improve them; programs and disciplines’ development of instruction and curriculum; and success of underserved students.
2. Obtain current opinions of faculty, deans, chief academic officers regarding need for CTL programs and services.
3. Conduct regular needs assessment on campus faculty development to identify specific strengths and weaknesses. Identify methods to achieve more stability and consistency in campus-based faculty professional development.