

1                                   **MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**  
2                                   **BOARD OF TRUSTEES STUDY SESSION**  
3                                   **April 21, 2010**

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5   **Members Present:** Chair David Olson; Trustees Dan McElroy, Christine Rice, Duane Benson,  
6 Cheryl Dickson, James Van Houten, Jacob Englund, Louis Sundin, Scott Thiss, Ruth Grendahl,  
7 David Paskach, Thomas Renier.

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9   **Committee Member Absent:** Trustee Terri Thomas

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11 **Leadership Council Committee Co-Chairs Present:** Senior Vice Chancellor Linda Baer  
12 and President Richard Davenport

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14 The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees held a Study Session on the  
15 System Strategic Plan on April 21, 2010 at Wells Fargo Place, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Board Room, 30 East 7<sup>th</sup>  
16 Street in St. Paul. Board of Trustees Chair Olson called the meeting to order at 10:05 am.

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18 **Acknowledgements and Overview**

19  
20 Chair McElroy acknowledged the trustees, presidents, and vice chancellors that served on the Ad  
21 Hoc Committee. He noted that the committee held four listening session in Brooklyn Park,  
22 Moorhead, Alexandria, and Mankato. Trustee Rice commented on the process as a valuable  
23 effort and that the system should consider conducting listening sessions going forward as  
24 opportunities to hear from the public.

25  
26 Trustee McElroy articulated that this is a bridge plan to 2014. He acknowledged the comments  
27 on the strategic plan as shared by board members and presidents. After today’s discussion, a  
28 draft will be presented for a first reading in May and a second reading and approval in June.

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30 **Preamble:**

31 Trustee McElroy reviewed the preamble noting a suggested change in the reference to  
32 “countervailing” to “today’s challenges”.

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34 **Strategic Direction One:**

35 Chair McElroy commented on the notable addition of “success” to strategic direction one.  
36 Trustee Van Houten asked whether there was some specific goal behind Goal 1.2 that would  
37 inform alternative language for “Work with” which does not seem particularly strong. Trustee  
38 McElroy asked whether “Collaborate” was more helpful. Senior Vice Chancellor Baer clarified  
39 that we cannot tell the K-12 schools what to do but there should be an effort to make this an  
40 active goal. Trustee McElroy suggested “Increase the preparation and enrollment of K-12  
41 students in higher education by ...”

42  
43 Chair McElroy noted Goal 1.3 and the submitted comments on affordability. Trustee Van  
44 Houten suggested this may be the most important goal to external stakeholders. He added that  
45 one approach to maintaining an affordable cost would be to address the expense side of the  
46 operation. The other approach would be to let affordable cost be implied as holding tuition equal  
47 to other states. Trustee Benson said that the multiple pricing model suggests there should be  
48 more clarity on the cost of going to college and for whom. Trustee Olson noted that 80 percent of  
49 our graduates stay in the state and suggested that we may need to go beyond Minnesota for our

1 future workforce. Trustee McElroy suggested that we may want to say “affordable net cost for all  
2 students.” Senior Vice Chancellor Baer noted that we compare the system’ tuition to similar  
3 systems in other states using net costs compared to the average income. Trustee Englund  
4 suggested that we need to highlight the financial access piece. President Davenport said that  
5 institutional affordability is often addressed within a competitive context for the marketplace  
6 such that institutions price themselves at the lowest possible level to support what institutions  
7 want to provide in their market. Chair McElroy suggested that Goal 1.3 be restated to include  
8 “affordable and competitive cost of attendance” and remove “for Minnesota students.”  
9

10 Chair McElroy moved to the newly proposed Goal 1.4 as informed by the Minnesota Measures  
11 report on student success and the emphasis on transfer. He noted President Ramaley’s concern  
12 over the ambiguity of the goal and staff’s suggestion to remove “to complete postsecondary  
13 programs.” Chancellor McCormick said that it is critical to add graduation and transfer while  
14 recognizing that some students’ educational goals may not include graduation.  
15

### 16 **Strategic Direction Two:**

17 Trustee Paskach offered “Ensure” to replace “Promote” suggesting that this is appropriate  
18 language for the aspirations in a system strategic plan. Trustee Rice stated concern that “Ensure”  
19 suggests a guarantee which may not be possible. Trustee Thiss stated his agreement with the  
20 proposed language “Achieve and deliver.” Trustee Van Houten said that we have difficulty in  
21 defining quality in education and need to stay with this as a priority. Chair McElroy suggested  
22 that the language be “Achieve” rather than “Ensure.”  
23

24 Trustee Olson indicated his interest in maintaining the term accountability in Goal 2.1. Chair  
25 McElroy noted that this is addressed in the overarching strategic direction.  
26

27 Chair McElroy noted Trustee Van Houten’s comments about prioritizing investment in cost  
28 effective approaches. Trustee Rice stated her concern with our ability to address that type of  
29 goal. Trustee Van Houten said his interest is in the goal stating something about the locations for  
30 our delivery options and not focusing on the pedagogy. Chair McElroy suggested Goal 2.3  
31 should be stated as “Provide multiple effective and efficient delivery options....” Trustee Benson  
32 noted that we are talking about students in one case and learning in another. He suggested  
33 reinserting “Achieve high quality learning...” Trustee Frederick suggested a change from  
34 programs and services to learning opportunities. Trustee Van Houten noted that programs are  
35 defined in Board policy but learning opportunities are not. President Davenport suggested adding  
36 learning opportunities to what we have instead of supplanting it. Chair McElroy noted the  
37 change to Goal 2.4 suggested by staff from “Engage” to “Employ”.  
38

### 39 **Strategic Direction Three:**

40 Trustee Van Houten stated concern for possible mission creep in Goal 3.2 that will increase our  
41 costs for cultural activities. Trustee Dickson said that this has consistently been in our strategic  
42 plan with public programs that serve the community and provide students the opportunity to  
43 perform and share their creative work. Trustee Van Houten said his concern is that particularly at  
44 a time of limited resources that these types of activities are beyond our educational mission.  
45 President Davenport responded that cultural or civic activity done for the community is of  
46 support to students and/or paid for by the community; institutions do not use taxpayer dollars to  
47 support solely community activities. Gail Olson provided the statutory language supporting  
48 Goal 3.2. Trustee Van Houten retracted his suggested revision.  
49

1 Chair McElroy noted President Ramaley’s concern regarding the regional suggestion in Goal 3.3  
2 noting that in many cases there is a statewide reach for institutions.  
3

4 **Strategic Direction Four:**

5 Chair McElroy moved the committee to strategic direction four and the suggestion from staff on  
6 Goal 4.2 “to address the challenges facing the system.” Senior Vice Chancellor Baer said that the  
7 revision better focuses the intent of this goal. Trustee Benson said that some clarity may be  
8 needed in “engage and draw upon” as it may not be known what that means. Trustee Paskasch  
9 noted that comments were made at listening sessions that we go to faculty for ideas and input.  
10 Trustee Olson suggested going back to the previous language. Chair McElroy suggested the term  
11 “Use.” Trustee Sundin stated her concern that the term “Use” is not the appropriate context when  
12 in fact we want faculty and staff to be supported in advancing innovation. Trustee Hightower  
13 stated that the original goal for 4.2 was to reward that activity and asked if the new language  
14 signaled that was no longer the case. Chair McElroy stated that is not the intent.  
15

16 Chair McElroy referenced the comments from staff and Trustee Van Houten regarding Goal 4.4,  
17 specifically the reference to “Support and scale transformative innovation.” Trustee Van Houten  
18 stated that he sees this as continuous improvement much like Goal 4.1 and that we may want to  
19 eliminate it. Chair McElroy stated the importance of Goal 4.4 for building disruptive innovation  
20 and if we were to remove it that we would want to add it on to Goal 4.1. Senior Vice Chancellor  
21 stated that we can be innovative in small steps but that transformative change may require bolder  
22 steps especially in the current financial context. Trustee Dickson suggested “Critically examine  
23 and improve structures, policies, and processes, to support transformative innovation.”  
24

25 **Strategic Direction Five:**

26 Trustee Benson stated that in the current economic environment we need changes that are  
27 sustainable. He noted that institutions are engaging their workforce in analyses that argue for the  
28 sustainability of what we do and would suggest adding this.  
29

30 Trustee Hightower noted that we include “Ensure” in the strategic direction which has a  
31 particular connotation as was addressed in Strategic Direction Two. Trustee Dickson stated that  
32 there is nothing here that indicates we are going to work on obtaining other financial resources.  
33 Trustee Van Houten suggested removing strategic direction five stating that if we innovate and  
34 change we will ensure the long term viability of the system.  
35

36 Trustee Sundin stated that “Ensure” seems appropriate and that this makes another statement  
37 about sustaining higher education for the next generations. Chair McElroy suggested that the  
38 Board may want to amend Strategic Direction Four to incorporate elements of Strategic  
39 Direction Five. Trustee Rice suggested adding elements in the Preamble to address the financial  
40 sustainability issues. Trustee Paskasch stated that there is some redundancy but with strategic  
41 direction five we are focusing primarily on change to address sustainability.  
42

43 Chancellor McCormick thanked the Ad Hoc Committee for their work and noted the importance  
44 of the Board of Trustees embracing this plan. He added that the Board needs to address the  
45 expectations for the presidents and institutions to implement this plan.  
46

47 Chair McElroy stated that perhaps we need to continue listening sessions beyond the context of  
48 the system strategic plan and engage faculty and students in such conversations. Trustee  
49 Grendahl acknowledged the suggestion of Trustee Rice in continuing listening sessions.

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2 Chair McElroy adjourned the session at 11:15 a.m.  
3 Respectfully submitted,  
4 Todd Harmening, Recorder