

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

Agenda Item Summary Sheet

Committee: Academic and Student Affairs

Date of Meeting: November 16, 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 committee is being asked to review the actions taken by Academic and Student Affairs, Office of the Chancellor prior to development and submission of the final report that will be submitted to the Office of Legislative Auditor by the Chair of the Board and the Chancellor.

Scheduled Presenter(s):

Interim Vice Chancellor Scott Olson

Outline of Key Points/Policy Issues:

Each issue has been addressed and the actions taken are described in the report.

Background Information:

In response to the Office of Legislative Auditor's evaluation of the System Office, several items that were identified for consideration were referred to the Academic and Student Affairs Committee.

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MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

BOARD INFORMATION
RESPONSE TO THE OLA EVALUATION OF THE SYSTEM OFFICE

1 **BACKGROUND**

2 The Office of Legislative Auditor recommendations in its February 2010 evaluation report on the MnSCU System Office included
3 seven items that were referred to the Academic and Student Affairs Committee. Below is a status of each recommendation.

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System Office Division or Function	Issues	Action
Oversight of student credit transfer	Easier transfer was a key merger goal and campuses past efforts have resulted in limited progress, but system leaders are making renewed attempts and student associations report continued problems.	<p>Academic and Student Affairs (ASA) has made significant progress in addressing transfer concerns. In January 2010, the Minnesota Student College Association and the Minnesota Student University Association, in association with the system office conducted a survey of students to better identify what the specific transfer concerns were. At the same time, an internal audit was conducted using a sample of student transcripts. The results of the survey and audit led to the development of the Smart Transfer Plan. The Board passed amendments to Policy 3.21, establishing requirement that colleges and universities post course outlines on their websites, making DARS and u.select the official repository of course equivalents and requiring that colleges and universities keep these databases up to date, and requiring the colleges and universities to inform students about the opportunity to appeal decisions about credit transfer.</p> <p>The Smart Transfer Plan includes five major components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeline for posting college and university course outlines by July 2011 • Complete evaluation of course equivalencies of all Minnesota Transfer Curriculum courses by July 2011 and remaining courses by July 2013 • Ensure that students are informed of credit transfer appeal processes by

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(Transfer cont'd)		<p>July 2011</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement review process to ensure compliance with Minnesota Transfer Curriculum requirements and develop communication channels to broaden awareness of Transfer Curriculum and other transfer information • Provide expanded training opportunities for college and university staff involved in transfer, with a goal that every transfer staff member attends at least one training event each year. <p>Other actions include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A continuous improvement addenda that will ensure continued attention to transfer as new questions or issues arise will be completed by December 31, 2010. • A Transfer Measure [credits accepted] has been added to the Board's Accountability Dashboard • Approval to hire an additional staff member in the Transfer unit to handle additional workload. Note: this brings staffing in the Transfer unit back to two, the same staffing level as in 2008.

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System-wide academic planning and curriculum development	Some campuses want system office to more actively foster program ideas and reduce duplication.	<p>Preliminary versions of a revised process, accommodating regional planning/consultation on new programs and program closures has been discussed with presidential leadership in October and November is scheduled for discussion with academic leaders (chief academic officers and deans) in late October. The revised process will be in place for 2011-12 academic year.</p> <p>Within fiscal limitations, several units (Minnesota Online, the Perkins program and, formerly, the Center for Teaching and Learning) currently provide funding for program development in specific areas through a competitive request for proposals process.</p>

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Approval of campus proposals to begin, revise, or close programs	Campus concerns about system office's timeliness, clarity of standards, and responsiveness.	<p>Implemented a new automated program approval process that streamlines the process for campuses as well as the Office of the Chancellor staff; worked with the Leadership Council to create a new flow chart outlining a simplified process for the development or closure; process is still in draft stage with completion in Spring 2011</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms are being redesigned to eliminate unnecessary detail while remaining compliant with Board policy and statutory requirements. • A new Web-based system (Navigate) is replacing the current Program Inventory System (Prinsys) which will significantly reduce paperwork and accelerate the processing of new program applications, program redesigns, program replications and program locations consistent with both Board policy and regional accreditor (Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association) standards. • Preliminary versions of a revised process, accommodating regional planning/consultation on new programs and program closures has been discussed with presidential leadership and October and November Leadership Council and with academic leaders (chief academic officers and deans) at the Fall Conference in late October. • New streamlined process will be fully implemented by start of FY11-12 academic year.

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Faculty professional development	Campuses could play a stronger role, although the system office has provided good support.	<p>A September 7, 2010 memorandum from the Chancellor has initiated a re-assessment of the faculty development role and a restructuring of the Center for Teaching and Learning. Reduced the staff in the Center for Teaching and Learning from 6.5 to 2.5 FTE relying more heavily on institutions providing this function.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Center for Teaching and Learning’s Steering Committee has been asked to participate in a year-long re-assessment of the Office of the Chancellor’s role in professional development of faculty. • Campuses are being asked to re-assess their role in providing faculty development opportunities formerly offered by the Center for Teaching and Learning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Initial discussions have occurred at Metropolitan Alliance (a coalition of metropolitan area Minnesota State College and University institutions) chief academic and presidential meetings on alternatives to previous CTL-facilitated options. ○ Further discussions are scheduled between ASA leadership and Metropolitan Alliance leaders on these alternatives.

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Impact and cost-effectiveness of online instruction	Need better assurance of the quality and cost-effectiveness of online instruction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minnesota Online continues to induce colleges/universities to adopt Quality Matters. QM) is a faculty-centered, peer review process that is designed to certify the quality of online and blended courses. QM is a leader in quality assurance for online education and has received national recognition for its peer-based approach and continuous improvement in online education and student learning] • The Minnesota Online Council approved a competency framework for the development of a resource to prepare faculty to teach online. Faculty representatives were part of the committee that helped create these competencies and the action. Minnesota Online is working with CTL to develop the material and information to "populate" the resource. • Minnesota Online staff are reviewing data from an audit by the <i>Center for Transforming Student Services</i> (CENTSS), a partnership including the Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications (WCET) which provides educational institutions with the tools and training they need to develop and deliver high-quality student services online. • Minnesota Online has a service level agreement (SLA) with Research and Planning to develop (a) Student success measures (b) Course completion measures and (c) a dashboard • Data from Noel-Levitz' Priorities Survey for Online Learners™ is being analyzed by Minnesota Online staff to identify areas of improvement.

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Oversight of customized training and continuing education	System office role is unclear; many presidents don't see clear purpose or leadership in this area.	Office of Chancellor System Director for Customized Training is being eliminated. Business and Industry Advisory Council has been created, and feedback supporting coordination to reduce unneeded duplication and competition has led us to conclude that some system oversight and use of innovation funds is warranted
Oversight of specialized training in firefighting and emergency medical services	Unclear why system office needs specialized staff to oversee these programs. Mixed views of system office performance by customers.	The firefighter training and EMT components and the library of the Fire Center will be eliminated or relocated to a campus, resulting in a reduction of 4 FTE. The remaining regulatory, compliance and emergency preparedness functions are located within the Facilities unit.