

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

Agenda Item Summary Sheet

Committee: Academic and Student Affairs **Date of Meeting:** July 19, 2011

Agenda Item: 2010-2011 Honorary Degrees Report

Proposed Policy Change Approvals Required by Policy Other Approvals Monitoring

Information

Cite policy requirement, or explain why item is on the Board agenda:

This report addresses the requirement of Part 7 of the approved Board of Trustees Policy 3.18 Honorary Degrees to provide reports twice a year.

Scheduled Presenter(s):

Scott Olson, Interim Vice Chancellor
Manuel López, Executive Director, Minnesota Online

Outline of Key Points/Policy Issues:

One institution awarded an honorary degree

Background Information:

This report addresses the requirement of Part 7 of the approved Board of Trustees Policy 3.18 Honorary Degrees.

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

BOARD INFORMATION

2010–2011 Honorary Degrees Report, Spring Commencement

1 **INTRODUCTION**

2
3 The Office of the Chancellor is submitting a report on honorary doctorates awarded at the close
4 of spring semester in fiscal year 2011.

5
6 **BACKGROUND**

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8 Policy 3.18 was originally adopted in 1996. As a result of a routine five-year review of all board
9 policies, amendments were proposed and the Board of Trustees acted on the policy on January
10 21, 2009.

11
12 On second reading, the Board of Trustees amended the initial motion to add

13
14 *Part 7. Report to the Board. The Chancellor shall provide a report on honorary degrees*
15 *awarded to the Board in January and July of each year. The report shall include*
16 *information about the number of degrees awarded, names of recipients, and degree*
17 *designations.*

18
19 Pursuant to System Procedure 3.18.1 implementing Policy 3.18 and as part of campus procedure,
20 each candidate was recommended to the respective campus president for consideration of the
21 conferral of an honorary degree as specified in procedure. This report addresses the requirement
22 of Part 7 of the approved Board of Trustees Policy 3.18 Honorary Degrees.

23
24 **REPORT**

25
26 On July 5, 2011 Associate Vice Chancellor Manuel Lopez sent a memorandum to college and
27 university chief academic officers requesting information on the honorary degrees awarded at the
28 2011 spring commencements. One institution awarded an honorary degree. The award,
29 recipients and accomplishments is outlined below in the college's own words.

30
31 **Riverland Community College**

32
33 The Office of the President at Riverland Community College indicated that this year's honorary
34 degree recipient is Richard L. Knowlton. The college awarded an Honorary Doctor of Education
35 degree because of Mr. Knowlton's work nationally and locally to help people, especially
36 traditionally under-represented students, obtain the education and/or training that will lead to
37 living wage employment. Mr. Knowlton received his award at Riverland's May 13, 2011
38 commencement ceremony.

1 Few people honored by Riverland Community College have the level of achievement as this
2 nominee. Mr. Knowlton served as President and CEO of Hormel Foods Inc. and chair of the
3 board of directors from 1981 to 1995.

4
5 Mr. Knowlton currently serves as Chair of The Hormel Foundation, director of the Horatio Alger
6 Association, is a member of the Business Advisory Council at the University of Colorado Leeds
7 Business School, and serves on the Eisenhower Medical Center Board. He has also served as a
8 director on the Mayo Clinic Advisory Board and on boards of U.S. Bank, ING America
9 Insurance Holdings, Inc., SUPERVALU Inc., and Reliastar. In 1999, The Hormel Foundation
10 donated \$5 million to Austin, Minn., to finance affordable housing, public transportation, a
11 cultural center, child care services and a scholarship program for the city's residents of color.
12 Mr. Knowlton's personal philanthropy includes contributing millions of his personal funds for a
13 major renovation of Austin High School, raising millions for the Horatio Alger Association, and
14 distributing millions of dollars of Hormel Foundation funds to worthy projects and organizations
15 in Austin/Mower County. In 2010, he announced a major gift of \$1M from the Hormel
16 Foundation for the *Cycles for Success* scholarship program at Riverland Community College,
17 which is designed to help traditionally underrepresented students obtain a postsecondary
18 education and educate more skilled workers for local employers. *Cycles for Success* was recently
19 honored for outstanding achievements in educational programs and services during the 2010-
20 2011 academic year.

21
22 In keeping with requirements of Chancellor's Procedure 3.18.1 Honorary Degrees, Riverland
23 uses a broad-based, inclusive approach in which all members of the college are asked for
24 candidates via a structured nomination form. A committee reviews the nominations and
25 forwards to the college's Administrative Council those nominees committee members
26 recommend as worthy according to the criteria established by the MnSCU Board of Trustees.
27 Members of the Administrative Council in turn recommend to the president the candidate they
28 believe is most deserving of this prestigious award.

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