

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

**Agenda Item Summary Sheet**

**Committee:** Academic and Student Affairs

**Date of Meeting:** October 18, 2011

**Agenda Item:** Proposed Amendment to Policy 3.36 Academic Programs

- Proposed Policy Change       Approvals Required by Policy       Other Approvals       Monitoring
- Information

**Scheduled Presenter(s):**

Larry Litecky, Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs

Mike López, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Leslie Mercer, Senior Associate Vice Chancellor for Research, Planning and Effectiveness

**Outline of Key Points/Policy Issues:**

- 2011 session law establishes education priorities for the Board of Trustees.
- College and university presidents were informed about this legislative language in a September 1, 2011 memo from Chancellor Steven Rosenstone.
- Academic program policy, while reflective of legislation, has not included foundational language that specifically reflects legislation found in State Higher Education Objectives, Budget Priorities, Powers and Duties, Missions, Courses and Programs, and Education Priorities.
- Standard policy revision processes are not complete.

**Background Information:**

New language, Laws of Minnesota 2011, 1<sup>st</sup> Special Session, Art. 1, Ch. 5, Sec. 4, Subd. 5, establishes education priorities for the Board of Trustees. This new language reinforces and extends prior Minnesota statutes from chapters 135A and 136F.

135A.011 State Higher Education Objectives

135A.034 Budget Priorities

136F.06 Powers and Duties

136F.05 Missions

136F.30 Courses and Programs

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

Policy amendments require Board action.

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

**BOARD ACTION**

**Proposed Amendment to Policy 3.36 Academic Programs  
*First Reading***

**INTRODUCTION**

State law, which was passed during the 2011 special legislative session, directs that:

***Subd. 5. Education Priorities***

*The Board of Trustees, in fulfilling the requirements of Minnesota Statutes, section 136F.06, by making reductions, approving programs of study, establishing requirements for completion of programs, and approving course offerings and requirements for credentials, must place the highest priority on meeting the needs of Minnesota employers for a skilled workforce. The board must focus on the efficient delivery of higher education, eliminate duplication throughout the system, and streamline the operation of the system to provide an education that prepares students for the workforce needs of Minnesota.*

Laws of Minnesota 2011, 1<sup>st</sup> Special Session, Art. 1, Ch. 5, Sec. 4, Subd. 5.

Initial responses to this law include a letter sent September 1, 2011 to college and university presidents and a proposal to modify Board of Trustee policy 3.36 – Academic Programs.

This agenda item proposes changes to policy 3.36 – Academic Programs Part 1. Purpose and Applicability and Part 5. Academic Program Approval. Academic program policy, while compliant with legislation, has not included language that reflects specific foundational legislation from several sections of Minnesota Statutes: State Higher Education Objectives, Budget Priorities, Powers and Duties, Missions, Courses and Programs, and Education Priorities.

**BACKGROUND**

The 2011 Minnesota law reinforces and extends language from Minnesota Statutes chapters 135A and 136F. Related sections are:

***135A.011 STATE HIGHER EDUCATION OBJECTIVES.***

*Minnesota's higher education investment is made in pursuit of the following objectives: (1) to ensure quality by providing a level of excellence that is competitive on a national and international level, through high quality teaching, scholarship, and learning in a broad range of arts and sciences, technical education, and professional fields; (2) to foster student success by enabling and encouraging students to choose institutions and programs that are best suited for their talents and abilities, and to provide an educational climate that supports students in pursuing their goals and aspirations; (3) to promote democratic values and enhance Minnesota's quality of life by developing understanding and appreciation of a free and diverse society; (4) to maintain access by providing an opportunity for all Minnesotans, regardless of personal circumstances, to participate in higher education; and (5) to enhance the economy by assisting the state in being competitive in the world market, and to prepare a highly skilled and adaptable workforce that meets Minnesota's opportunities and needs.*

***135A.034 BUDGET PRIORITIES.***

*Subdivision 1. Operating budget.*

*The governing boards of the University of Minnesota, and the Minnesota State Colleges and*

*Universities shall each develop, for legislative and executive branch acceptance, its highest budget priorities in accordance with statewide objectives for higher education under section 135A.011.*

**136F.06 POWERS AND DUTIES.**

*Subdivision 1. General authority.*

*The board shall possess all powers necessary to govern the state colleges and universities and all related property. Those powers shall include, but are not limited to, those enumerated in this section. The board shall prescribe conditions of admission, set tuition and fees, approve programs of study and requirements for completion of programs, approve the awarding of appropriate certificates, diplomas, and degrees, enter into contracts and other agreements, and adopt suitable policies for the institutions it governs. To the extent practicable in protecting statewide interests, the board shall provide autonomy to the campuses while holding them accountable for their decisions.*

**136F.05 MISSIONS.**

*The mission of the board is to provide programs of study that meet the needs of students for occupational, general, baccalaureate, and graduate education. The state universities, community colleges, and technical colleges shall have distinct missions as provided in section 135A.052, subdivision 1. Within that statutory definition and subject to the approval of the board, each community college, state university, and technical college may develop its own distinct campus mission. The board shall develop administrative arrangements that make possible the efficient use of the facilities and staff of the technical colleges, community colleges, and state universities for providing these several different programs of study, so that students may have the benefit of improved and broader course offerings, ease of transfer among schools and programs, integrated course credit, coordinated degree programs, and coordinated financial aid. In carrying out the merger of the three separate systems, the board shall control administrative costs by eliminating duplicative administrative positions and course offerings.*

**136F.30 COURSES AND PROGRAMS.**

*The board shall review and approve or disapprove campus proposals for adding, deleting, or substantially changing programs of study, including graduate and undergraduate academic programs, training in professional, semiprofessional, and technical fields, and adult education. The board shall avoid duplicate program offerings. The board may initiate activities to close programs. The board shall place a high priority on ensuring the transferability of credit.*

**CONSULTATION**

Consultation has occurred or will occur for the proposed policy changes as follows:

- Reviewed at Academic & Student Affairs Policy Council - 09/22/11
- To be reviewed at Academic and Student Affairs Leadership Council – 10/20/11
- Mailed out for review and comment – 10/04/11
- To be reviewed at IFO Meet and Confer – 11/04/11
- To be reviewed at MSUAASF Meet and Confer – 10/28/11
- MSCF Meet and Confer – TBD

**RECOMMENDED COMMITTEE ACTION**

The Educational Policy Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees adopt the following motion:

**RECOMMENDED MOTION**

The Board of Trustees approves the amendment to Policy 3.36 Academic Programs.

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

**BOARD ACTION ITEM**

**PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO  
BOARD POLICY 3.36 ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

**3.36 Academic Programs**

**Part 1. Purpose and Applicability.** The purpose of the Academic Programs policy is to direct ~~system~~ decision-making regarding the development, approval and management of credit-based academic programs. In order to meet Minnesota's educational needs, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system shall endeavor to:

1. Ensure quality and excellence that is competitive on a national and international level in meeting the needs of students for occupational, general, undergraduate, and graduate education;
2. Facilitate ease of transfer among schools and programs, integrate course credit, and coordinate degree programs;
3. Give highest priority to meeting the needs of Minnesota employers for a highly skilled and adaptable workforce;
4. Enhance Minnesota's quality of life by developing understanding and appreciation of a free and diverse society; and
5. Eliminate unnecessary duplication and achieve efficient and streamlined operations.

~~This policy applies to credit based academic programs of system colleges and universities.~~

**Part 2. Definitions.** The following definitions have the meanings indicated for all Board policies unless the text clearly indicates otherwise.

**Subpart A. Academic award.** Academic award means a certificate, diploma or degree.

**Subpart B. Academic program.** Academic program means a cohesive arrangement of college-level credit courses and experiences designed to accomplish predetermined objectives leading to the awarding of a degree, diploma, or certificate. Undergraduate degree programs shall include a general education component. The purpose of an academic program is to:

1. increase students' knowledge and understanding in a field of study or discipline,

2. qualify students for employment in an occupation or range of occupations, and/or
3. prepare students for advanced study.

**Subpart C. Academic program inventory.** Academic program inventory means the official list of academic programs offered by system colleges and universities.

**Subpart D. Credit.** Credit means a quantitative measure of instructional time assigned to a course or an equivalent learning experience such as class time per week over an academic term.

**Subpart E. General education.** General education means a cohesive curriculum defined by faculty through system college or university procedures to develop reasoning ability and breadth of knowledge through an integration of learning experiences in the liberal arts and sciences.

### **Part 3. Authorized Academic Awards.**

**Subpart A. System college and university award authority.** System colleges and universities have authority to confer academic awards only as specified below.

1. **Community colleges.** Community colleges have the authority to confer undergraduate certificates, diplomas, associate in arts, associate in fine arts, associate in science, and associate in applied science degrees.
2. **Consolidated colleges.** Consolidated colleges have the authority to confer undergraduate certificates, diplomas, associate in arts, associate in fine arts, associate in science, and associate in applied science degrees.
3. **Technical colleges.** Technical colleges have the authority to confer undergraduate certificates, diplomas, associate in science, and associate in applied science degrees.
4. **Universities.** Universities have the authority to confer undergraduate and graduate certificates and associate in arts, associate in fine arts, associate in science, baccalaureate, and graduate degrees.

Approval by the Board of Trustees is required for a system college or university to confer an academic award type for which specific authority is not granted in this policy.

**Subpart B. Academic award characteristics.** The chancellor shall specify the characteristics of academic awards.

**Subpart C. Academic program credit length limits.** Academic programs that lead to an associate degree shall be limited to 60 credits and academic programs that lead to a baccalaureate degree shall be limited to 120 credits unless the chancellor grants a waiver

1 based on industry or professional accreditation standards that require a greater number of  
2 credits.

3  
4 The chancellor shall set program credit length requirements and waiver criteria for  
5 undergraduate certificates, diplomas and graduate level awards.  
6

7 **Part 4. Authority to Establish Academic Program Locations.** Approval of the chancellor is  
8 required for establishment of a location at which an academic program may be offered.  
9

10 **Part 5. Academic Program Approval.** Approval of the chancellor is required for new  
11 academic programs, changes to existing academic programs, suspension of academic programs,  
12 and closure of academic programs at system colleges and universities.  
13

14 An approved academic program shall include curricular requirements for earning an academic  
15 award, such as credits in general education, a major and/or minor, and all prerequisite courses.  
16 The chancellor shall maintain the academic program inventory and annually report to the Board  
17 of Trustees on the status of the inventory. Only academic programs approved by the chancellor  
18 as recorded in the academic program inventory may be offered by system colleges and  
19 universities.  
20

21 **Part 6. Student Options when Academic Programs are Suspended, Closed, or Changed.** A  
22 system college or university shall provide a student admitted to an academic program an  
23 opportunity, consistent with system college or university policy, to complete the academic  
24 program when it is suspended or closed or when the requirements have changed.  
25

26 **Part 7. Academic Review.** Each system college and university shall regularly review its  
27 academic programs for the purpose of academic planning and improvement.  
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29 Each system college and university shall submit an annual summary of its academic program  
30 review activity to the chancellor.  
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32 The chancellor, as appropriate, may conduct statewide or regional reviews of academic programs  
33 or program clusters, report findings to the Board of Trustees and, when necessary, impose  
34 conditions on academic programs.

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*POLICY CONTENT FORMAT:*

*Single underlining represents proposed new language.*

*Strikeouts represent existing language proposed to be eliminated.*