

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

October 21, 2020

Present: Chair Jay Cowles, Vice Chair Roger Moe, Trustees Alex Cirillo, Dawn Erlandson, Jerry Janezich, April Nishimura, Rudy Rodriguez, George Soule, Cheryl Tefer, Michael Vekich, Javier Morillo, Kathy Sheran, Asani Ajogun, and Chancellor Devinder Malhotra.

Absent: Oballa Oballa and Ahmitara Alwal

Call to Order

Chair Jay Cowles called the meeting to order at 11:15 am. He welcomed all trustees, presenters, participants and the audience statewide.

Representatives of the bargaining units and student associations were requested to submit their written testimony in advance of the meeting. All testimony was distributed to trustees for their review yesterday evening.

Chair Cowles conducted a roll call of the trustees who were participating by Zoom.

Trustees attending: Alex Cirillo, Dawn Erlandson, Kathy Sheran, Jerry Janezich, April Nishimura, Rudy Rodriguez, George Soule, Javier Morillo, Cheryl Tefer, Asani Ajogun, Michael Vekich, and Roger Moe. Trustees Oballa Oballa and Ahmitara Alwal were absent.

Chancellor Devinder Malhotra Remarks

Thank you | support for Minnesota State in bonding bill

As you know the bonding bill passed with bipartisan support in the most recent special session. I want to express our gratitude to legislators and the Governor, who have been such strong partners in passing a capital investment bill. I made calls to legislative leaders last week expressing our thanks for their efforts to get the bill across the finish line.

These investments are crucial in helping to ensure our campuses are equipped with the infrastructure needed to **provide exceptional education and training, and ultimately to prepare our students to** be the talent Minnesota needs for today and tomorrow's workforce. And more importantly, the bill provides Minnesota State to continue to take care of what we have through HEAPR allocation.

The bonding bill that passed last week fund over \$90.8 million in critical capital investments for Minnesota State colleges and universities – investments that directly strengthen our state.

I also recognize that there were some important projects and HEAPR funding that did not make it into the final negotiated bill, and we continue to make our case when the legislature reconvenes in January. As Vice Chancellor Maki mentioned this morning, the next round for bonding will start soon. In 9 short months, we will begin hosting the Capital Investment committees on our campuses as they tour the state and seeing first-hand our capital needs. There is no better way to tell our story than to have lawmakers see the transformative work that occurs at our colleges and universities. My thanks to all who made last year's tours a success.

Thank you | Get-out-the vote and Census 2020

With the general election 13 days away, I appreciate all involved in non-partisan get-out-the vote efforts, as well as advocacy efforts to complete the 2020 Census.

Minnesota had the highest rate in the nation, over 75 percent, in self-responses to the 2020 Census.

Voting and other forms of civic participation are essential to the health of our democracy. In particular, I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to Students United and LeadMN for their work in empowering students and promoting civic engagement.

3M partnership to advance social justice and racial equity

I am very pleased to share our emerging partnership with 3M to advance social justice and racial equity.

Recognizing that no single organization can move the needle on racial equity on its own, Minnesota State joins the 3M Community Coalition with others from Minnesota local government, nonprofits and the education sector. I would like to recognize former Trustee Ann Anaya who has been instrumental in connecting Minnesota State to this critical partnership and work.

We were notified yesterday that the important racial equity work occurring at Minnesota State colleges and universities will be supported through a \$250,000 investment from 3M – and I am grateful for their partnership.

COVID-19 dashboard

Since the beginning of the pandemic, our unified approach in navigating through the uncertainty continues to enable us to act nimbly and make swift decisions as new challenges and concerns arise.

Among our response strategies and actions, in September, we launched the Minnesota State COVID-19 Dashboard. The dashboard is a vital tool that informs our campus communities about COVID-19 cases and community spread and aids campus leadership

in its decision making.

I extend my many thanks to all involved. It is a team effort across HR, IT, ASA, Facilities, and Communications to ensure that every Friday the dashboard is updated and made available to the broader community.

This work is part of our ongoing weekly COVID efforts. In addition to the weekly COVID leadership calls led by Vice Chancellor Maki and Associate Vice Chancellor Yolitz, we review an analysis of the dashboard data.

Fall semester under way | COVID update

Trustees, with the fall semester two-thirds complete, I hope you share in my optimism that we will continue to effectively forge ahead through these uncertain times to support our students.

These past months have not been easy —likely the hardest in our careers – and through these difficult times, I remain deeply humbled and in awe of our Minnesota State community. Our campus leadership teams, faculty, and staff have worked extremely hard to prepare our students and campuses for this fall. Their preparation continued and tireless efforts, and top-notch delivery are outstanding and deeply appreciated.

Example of Impact

The crisis, by its nature, has put our strength in collaboration and innovation on full display. Our faculty, staff, and students have risen to challenges to support each other and their communities.

- Campus staff moved important student support services to remote delivery. Central Lakes College, for example, is offering tutoring remotely.
- Inver Hills Community College developed a program, titled the Growth and Purpose – GAP – year that allows students to gain paid professional experience while also earning academic credits.
- It has been a huge effort, requiring outside-the-box thinking to work through the complex logistics, for campuses that have residence halls to set up social distancing and quarantine procedures and policies.

Students are serving their communities in meaningful and impactful ways during the crisis. To highlight a few examples:

- The dental program at Minnesota State University, Mankato is hosting free dental clinics as a way for student hygienists to receive firsthand experience.
- About two dozen Minnesota State Technical and Community nursing students responded to the call for volunteers for the Minnesota Department of Health's community-wide COVID-19 testing.

Mental health summit

The pandemic has taken – and continues to have – an emotional toll. I think we can all relate to the viral tweet from earlier this year, “I am tired of being part of a major historical event.”

As was shared with you yesterday, this Thursday, we are partnering with the University of Minnesota to host a statewide Mental Health Summit for higher education leaders and others to share knowledge and foster discussion to support student mental health. There are over 750 registrations with representation from all 37 Minnesota state institutions, all University of Minnesota campuses, and colleagues from the tribal colleges and private colleges.

I want to thank President Joan Gabel for inviting Minnesota State to be a partner in this summit. It speaks well to the renewed sense of collaboration by Minnesota’s two public systems of higher education.

The work ahead – prepared and equipped through uncertainty to succeed

As we move forward in the coming months, we will continue face hard and unexpected challenges and Minnesota State **will** adapt accordingly.

I am grateful for the leadership and vigilance among our colleges and universities, including in their efforts to manage the positive cases on campuses and within their communities.

As we continue to respond nimbly to disruptions associated with the pandemic, we also are moving forward on the critical work of managing and operating Minnesota State as a system. This includes bringing forward the budget, preparing for the legislative session, and launching and filling seven executive searches.

More importantly, we continue to work with the board on our strategic positioning of Equity 2030 and workforce priorities. As the state’s largest and most diverse higher education provider, we are the partner of choice, positioned to move Minnesota’s economy forward.

Through an equity and social justice lens – and knowing of Minnesota’s rapidly changing demographics – we cultivate, educate, and train the workforce talent needed our economic recovery and long-term vitality.

Trustees, thank you for your continued leadership and support. Chair Cowles, this concludes my remarks.

I want to echo appreciation to our legislators for support in funding the capital investment needs of our colleges and universities with the passing of a bonding bill last week. Although the final product was not as robust as the governor's original recommendation. It took the bipartisan work of many people to keep this bill moving forward. This made possible by these investments will benefit our students for years to come. In fact, later this week I will be visiting Riverland Community College's Albert Lea campus to attend the grand opening for their newly renovated Transportation Trade and Industrial Education Center. Here I will see firsthand the benefits of the state's investment the Riverland there are students which now has campus facilities that support accessibility and create multidisciplinary learning spaces fast-growing technical fields.

I also want to thank Trustee Janezich for his leadership on the Facilities Committee that supported this important system work. During this morning's Finance committee meeting we had our first reading of the system's FY22 and FY23 legislative biennial operating request. This request reflects the system's focus on the sustainability of our colleges and universities as well as the priority placed on ongoing equity and affordability work. I thank my fellow Trustees for their attention and consideration of this critical part of the systems work as we look forward to a second reading and Board vote at next month's meeting.

I would also like to recognize Trustee Dawn Erlandson who recently ended her term as Chair of the Board of Directors of the Association of Community College Trustees and National Organization, which represents the nation's community college program relations. We were not able to appropriately celebrate and thank Trustee Erlandson for her service at this month's National ACCT Leadership Congress since the annual event was held virtually this year, but we look forward to doing so in the future when circumstances permit.

Lastly, I want to extend congratulations to Trustee Cheryl Tefer who was elected Central Region State Coordinator at the recent ACCT Leadership Congress. Thank you, Trustee Tefer.

Consent Agenda

Chair Cowles asked if anyone wanted to remove an item from the Consent Agenda. No items were removed.

Following a motion from Trustee Erlandson and a second from Trustee Rodriguez, a roll call vote was conducted and passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda

- 1. Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting, May 20, 2020.**
- 2. Minutes of the Committee of the Whole, June 16, 2020**
- 3. Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting, June 17, 2020**
- 4. Minutes of the Committee of the Whole, July 22, 2020**
- 5. Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting, September 2, 2020**
- 6. Contracts Exceeding \$1 Million:**

- a. Student Internet and Cable services – Minnesota State University, Mankato
 - b. Student Internet and Cable services – Minnesota State University Moorhead
 - c. Extension for HVAC and Mechanical Services – Metropolitan State University
7. Establishment of Vice Chancellor for Equity and Inclusion

Board Policy Decisions

Trustee Cirillo moved approval of the board policy decisions. Trustee Rodriguez seconded the motion, and the policy amendments were adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

1. Proposed Amendment to Board Policy 3.22 Course Syllabi and Course Outlines
2. Proposed Amendment to Board Policy 3.5 Post-secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO)

Board Standing Committee Reports

Human Resources Committee, Dawn Erlandson, Vice Chair

Committee Vice Chair Erlandson explained that they have already approved one of the two pieces of business which was the establishment of the Vice Chancellor for Equity and Inclusion. Committee Vice Chair Erlandson reported that the Human Resources Committee received Chancellor Malhotra's recommendation of an Interim Vice Chancellor for Information Technology Services. Chancellor Malhotra recommended Ross Berndt, currently serving as the Associate Vice Chancellor for Information Technology Services.

Committee Vice Chair Erlandson read the following motion: The Board of Trustees, upon the recommendation of Chancellor Malhotra, establishes a new Vice Chancellor for Equity and Inclusion position on the cabinet effective October 21, 2020. The board authorizes the chancellor, in consultation with the chair of the board and chair of the Human Resources Committee, to initiate a search to identify highly qualified candidates for the position and present a recommendation for the Board.

A roll call vote was conducted and the motion carried unanimously.

Time was taken to congratulate and thank the departing Vice Chancellor Ramon Padilla for all his service to this organization over the years getting us to the point where we are at on a technology basis.

Interim Vice Chancellor Berndt expressed his appreciation for the opportunity.

Trustee Erlandson ended her report with the overview of the executive search process. She explained the searches this year will be extensive. There are five presidents and two vice chancellors they are searching for and discussed the cost and benefits of hiring outside search firms.

Academic and Student Affairs Committee, Cheryl Tefer, Chair

Committee Chair Tefer called out the two board policy decisions that were reviewed. Changes

to the policies included formatting and writing styles that were applied to those written policies. The committee recommended the Board move to adopt the proposed revisions to both policies.

Senior Vice Chancellor Anderson reviewed the ASA Committee topics and upcoming agenda for the academic year with no changes or edits offered. The committee heard a presentation from Senior Vice Chancellor Anderson titled “Equity and Action: Understanding and addressing local and regional student needs”. With the Board's commitment to Equity 2030, the presentation focused on how best to understand and respond to an array of basic student needs. The presentation was informed by the results from “Real College Survey” a report from The Hope Center for College Community and Justice. The national survey was created to assess basic needs including affordability of food and housing. Other guests included Paul Shepherd the System Director for Student Development and Success, Gregg Raisanen, Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs at Alexandria Technical and Community College, Michael Berndt the President of Dakota County and Technical College and Inver Hills Community College, and Robbyn Wacker the President of St. Cloud State University.

Trustee Tefer concluded her report by reminding the Board that in 2018 and 2019 nearly 10,000 Minnesota State students from 25 community and technical colleges and three state universities in our system were surveyed putting a human face on all the numbers that they received. The trustees were all allotted time at that point to respond to the survey results and comment.

Audit Committee, George Soule, Chair

Committee Chair Soule reported that the presentation this month was about the bookstore collaborative review, which he felt was riveting and showed mostly positive results of the collaborative process with some room for improvement. Overall it was a good presentation.

Outreach & Engagement Committee, Dawn Erlandson, Chair

Committee Chair Erlandson reported that they heard from an important partnership between Rochester Community and Technical College and the Zumbro Valley Health Center on helping students with mental health and providing them opportunities to meet with therapists and counselors. Fortuitously, they began this partnership before the pandemic, and she expects that it will prove very beneficial as time passes. The students led this effort to have this partnership and have increased their fees to cover costs and pay for expenses. This is a good model for other campuses using our partners in the community who have expertise in various areas of need that aren't education related. Our core mission is education, but we are well aware that our students are facing food and housing shortages and other important needs to live. This is a really important topic because students can't focus on learning if they are hungry or struggling with mental health.

Committee Chair Erlandson concluded her report by announcing that Chancellor Malhotra is co-hosting with University of Minnesota President Joan Gabel the statewide Mental Health Summit for higher education leaders and partners. She also took a few minutes to thank Chair Cowles, Chancellor Malhotra, and colleagues for their support for her as Chair of ACCT.

Finance Committee, Roger Moe, Chair

Committee Chair Moe reported that the main discussions focused around FY2021 operating budget updates. Enrollments have decreased and the federal fund budget is stable, and the revenue fund budget has become more reliant on reserves due to the pandemic. Vice Chancellor for Finance Bill Maki is continuing to monitor the budgets. He also had a discussion on the first reading of the FY2022 and FY2023 biennial budget request and is requesting the Board look closely at that as they pose a couple of questions that they will be thinking about over the next couple of months.

- Does this proposed budget request reflect the highest priorities of Minnesota State?
- Is there support for the overall nature and scope of the proposal?

Student Associations

Student associations and bargaining units were invited to submit written testimony in lieu of the opportunity to address the Board in person. The testimony was distributed to Trustees for their review yesterday and has also been posted to the Board website under the meeting materials link. Written testimony for student associations was submitted by Students United, Jonathon McNicholes, State Chair. Testimony was not received from LeadMN. Trustees Cirillo and Erlandson attended a listening session of the LeadMN Annual Student Statewide Conference last week.

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Bargaining Units

Written testimony was submitted by the following bargaining units: Inter Faculty Organization, Brent Jeffers, President; Minnesota State College Faculty, Matt Williams, President; Minnesota State University Association of Administrative and Service Faculty, Tracy Rahim, President; and Middle Management Association, Gary Kloos, Executive Director.

Trustee Reports

Vice Chair Moe commented that the next seven months are going to be particularly difficult with the epidemic and its impact on the economy, which will have an impact on our budget. He added that when reading the letters from our partners, faculty, bargaining units and student organizations, he sensed from all of them a deep commitment that we are all in this together and that this is a shared responsibility.

Trustee Tefer acknowledged Trustee Erlandson and the respect she has for her regarding her role with ACCT. She was happy to hear the report on the challenges of mental illness issues related to our student population. She had just spent some time with Trustee Cirillo listening to

students at a listening session and then following that up in the report was great and the presenters did a wonderful job.

Trustee Soule gave an update that the Chancellor has appointed a Minnesota State Taskforce on Law Enforcement Education Reform. It consists of about 40 community members who are interested in law enforcement and include people from Minnesota State and our schools. They have had two meetings to date and have had good discussions on the topic. They are working on some high-level recommendations for the Chancellor and the Board to come early next year.

Chancellor Malhotra underscored the importance of the student mental health work and the hope that from these conversations some state level strategies will emerge which will transcend systems and particular institutions to develop common approaches to help us deal with this problem. He noted Trustee Erlandson was registered for the conference and encouraged other trustees to attend.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for November 17-18, 2020

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:05 pm.