



**Executive Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
April 7, 2021**

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A meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees was held on April 7, 2021.

Committee members present: Jay Cowles, Chair; Roger Moe, Vice Chair; Alex Cirillo, Dawn Erlandson, April Nishimura, Cheryl Tefer, and Michael Vekich

Committee members absent: None

Other board members present: Asani Ajogun, Oballa Oballa, Rudy Rodriguez, Kathy Sheran

Staff present: Devinder Malhotra, Chancellor; Eric Davis, Vice Chancellor for Human Resources; Kari Campbell, Interim Board Director

The meeting materials for this meeting are available [here](#). An audio recording of the meeting is available [here](#).

Chair Cowles called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

**Chair's Updates**

As we gather today, I'm aware that currently both our state Senate and House are working to pass their higher education funding bills. I anticipate a brief update from the Chancellor today in his remarks and eagerly await the final results of these efforts which are of utmost importance to the work of Minnesota State. I encourage trustees to stay tuned as well.

I would like to note that this month's board meetings will include a Committee of the Whole meeting during which we will receive an update on the NextGen project. This will be the first update on this project since the board approved the vendor contract and finance plan for NextGen in November and will serve as the first of regular quarterly updates on this critical work. I look forward to hearing about implementation progress.

We will also hear an update on the executive searches currently underway, with two of seven searches having been concluded. This is critical work for the system and I eagerly await an update and successful conclusion of all seven searches in the next couple months.

Following these items, Kari Campbell will be providing an update on the discussion at the March Executive Committee around improving our committee effectiveness through enhanced pre-meeting support and communication along with additional planned changes to board operations.

As a reminder: our next board and committee meetings are scheduled for April 20-21 in a Zoom format for both days.

### **Chancellor's Updates**

Chair Cowles, Vice Chair Moe, and trustees,

My remarks are brief today as we near the home stretch of the year with about 6 weeks remaining of both the spring semester and the legislative session.

As we shared with trustees this week, the House and Senate higher education committees have introduced their respective bills. We are hopeful legislative leadership will be able to come to an agreement and negotiate all the bills during the regular session. From the updates we have shared with Trustees and campus leaders, when the 'send' button is hit, you can hear voices coming from all our campuses saying, "They did what!"

I have been reminded that there tends to be positioning before conference committees, and I can assure you that we will continue to make Minnesota State's case for the long-term financial stability at each of our campuses.

We are pleased that there are provisions in each bill that are aligned with Equity 2030 as it relates to food insecurity, zero-cost textbooks, student basic needs, and support for mental health initiatives. The main concern we have is the lack of ongoing base revenue, especially in the second year of the biennium, whether it be tuition or state appropriation.

In the coming weeks, I will be laser focused on the alignment of these proposals, as well as any legislative direction on how campuses are to use one-time federal funds, because we simply cannot utilize federal funds for ongoing obligations. That does not serve our students, campuses and the State of Minnesota well.

I am pleased that Governor Walz has remained steadfast in his support for our legislative request, and we know Commissioner Olson is committed to that agenda. There is also no question that Chair Tomassoni and Chair Bernardy care deeply about

our colleges and universities success, and I am optimistic about a reasonable outcome of the 2021 legislative session.

At last month's Executive Committee meeting, I shared that we were monitoring closely the pending third coronavirus relief package. A week later the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) was signed into law which provides our colleges and universities with funding to help to continue to respond to the effects of the coronavirus.

We are still waiting on the final, validated numbers from the feds but early estimates from some of the national associations estimate that our colleges and universities could receive up to \$328 million of which \$164 million is direct student aid.

As we have seen with the previous two rounds of federal funding once the spreadsheets are out, there remains a lot of questions in the details. We have worked actively with our national association partners to continue to get clarity on the CRRSAA institutional funding and we are hopeful that the questions that remain regarding the use of institutional funding and clearly guidance on the student portion will be received in the ARPA guidance when it is released.

**Agenda Item 4: Executive search update**

Chair Cowles invited Vice Chancellor Davis to provide an update on ongoing executive searches which include five presidential searches and two vice chancellor searches.

This being an informational item, there was no vote taken.

**Agenda Item 5: Update on committee effectiveness work & board processes**

Chair Cowles invited Board Director Campbell to present an update on efforts to improve committee effectiveness through better pre-meeting support and communication. Board Director Campbell reviewed activities since the March Executive Committee meeting and short-term and long-term action steps.

This being an informational item, there was no vote taken.

**Adjournment**

The committee chair adjourned the meeting at 8:55 a.m.