



**Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 5, 2022**

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees was held on January 5, 2022.

Committee members present: Jay Cowles, Chair; Rudy Rodriguez, Vice Chair; Roger Moe, Treasurer; Dawn Erlandson, April Nishimura, Cheryl Tefer, Michael Vekich

Committee members absent: None

Other board members present: Kathy Sheran

Staff present: Devinder Malhotra, Chancellor; Kari Campbell, Interim Board Director

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

Chair Cowles called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

Chair's Update

Welcome to the first meeting of a new year! I hope that trustees and everyone listening in was able to enjoy a restful holiday season. I am also thinking of students, faculty and staff at our campuses as they began a new semester next week. I very much appreciate the ongoing work to ensure the health and safety of the entire Minnesota State community and to support our students' progress toward their educational goals. I want to note for committee members, as well as other trustees who may participate in Executive Committee meetings, that based on the work reviewed at the committee's November 3rd meeting, we will be holding all Executive Committee meetings scheduled for this fiscal year. Please note this on your calendars accordingly. I've asked Kari to distribute the calendar and work plan for the remainder of this year so that you are aware of the topics we anticipate taking up at each meeting.

Before I call on the Chancellor for remarks, I want to note that our next board and committee meetings are scheduled for January 25-26. We will meet in a Zoom format for both days. This decision was made in consultation with the chancellor and is in keeping with current guidance and efforts at campuses to reduce foot traffic as a mitigation response to the recent surge in COVID-19 cases. We will continue to assess returning to in-person format as board meetings continue this spring.

Chancellor's Updates

Thank you, Chair Cowles, Vice Chair Rodriguez, members of the committee, members of the board, who have joined us today.

As the Chair alluded to, this is an exciting time for us. It's a beginning of a new year, the beginning of a new semester, and we are coming out of a little bit of a downtime for most of us with a renewed sense of hope and optimism. However, it becomes increasingly challenging to keep that renewed sense of hope and optimism going, as this pandemic seems to be transforming itself into an endemic. In that regard, we are still pursuing our twin goals of keeping our campuses open, in different modalities, so that our students can continue their educational journey, while also keeping our faculty staff and students safe.

As we came out of Thanksgiving break, we asked our campuses to reduce the foot traffic with whatever strategies they thought were best suited for their campuses as a mitigation strategy for the expected surge for the Omicron variant, and I must say our campuses responded. They finished the semester successfully.

And so, as we start the spring semester, our stance has not changed from how we ended the fall semester. We are still asking our campuses that, as our students come back and we open for classes next week, we reduce foot traffic as much as possible. We continue to pursue our teaching and learning goals while keeping our campuses safe. As this pandemic has emerged over the last two years, there has been a lot of learning which has occurred, and it has created a little more capacity, I should say, where we are adapting to the changing public health data and information with each new wave of this pandemic.

We have continued to look at the CDC guidance and to consult with Minnesota Department of Health to make sure we are utilizing their information and recommendations as part and parcel of our mitigation strategies. Over the holidays, the CDC announced changes in the quarantine period so there is still additional clarity needed. We will incorporate this into our mitigation strategies.

We will provide an update to you in the next board meeting about COVID response and strategies, but even before the board meeting, it's our intent to send you a written update. As the new information evolves and we move into the next week when our campuses open up, we can also give you an update with regard to the COVID response. Even though COVID has taken a lot of our time and effort, there is also the work of strategically positioning the system for the long haul that has continued even during the pandemic. I want to assure the committee and the board that we want to make sure that we don't miss out on this opportunity for such positioning.

As you know, last fall we created a new unit on workforce development and brought on Larry Lundblad as the Executive Director of Workforce Development. This unit has been

working along with the Minnesota Health Center for Excellence and with the governor's office and governance team, in initially training 300 National Guard members. They have also put in place additional training for another thousand National Guard members. This is in full force and proceeding effectively. It is being led by our Minnesota Health Center for Excellence and by our colleges and universities. It will be done in a very short period of time, so that's very exciting.

In the next few months, we will also focus increasingly more on providing access to data and data analytics to our colleges and universities, so that they can make and utilize that information for their own strategic positioning. Secondly, and more importantly, given the length of the pandemic, the importance of monitoring campus climate and campus stress levels has become increasingly important, so we will focus on that.

There are three executive searches currently underway, which are all proceeding well. We will likely interview by mid-February for both the presidency position for Bemidji State University and Northwest Technical College and the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs. They've identified the semi-finalists who will be interviewed by the committees. We hope to bring the finalists back for campus and system office visits in mid-February, and we are still on track for bringing that recommendation to the Board in March. Lastly, the search for the Executive Director of Internal Auditing has been lagging a little bit behind, but is proceeding smoothly. That is a little more abbreviated process and is being shared with trustees.

I conclude my remarks and welcome any questions, comments or observations.

Agenda Item 3: Minutes of November 3, 2021

Chair Cowles asked if there are any changes or amendments to the minutes then asked for a motion to approve. Trustee Moe made the motion and Vice Chair Rodriguez provided a second. A roll call vote was conducted and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Agenda Item 4: Proposed Amendment to Board Policy 1A.2 Board of Trustees (Second Reading)

Chair Cowles reviewed proposed amendments to Board Policy 1A.2 Board of Trustees and received feedback from committee members. The meeting materials for this item can be found starting on page 5.

The committee agreed to defer voting on this item, which will be brought back for a third reading at the March 2, 2022 Executive Committee meeting.

Agenda Item 5: Proposed Committee Charter Revisions – Executive Committee (First Reading)

Chair Cowles reviewed proposed amendments to the Executive Committee charter. The meeting materials for this item begin on page 17.

The committee voted unanimously to suspend the rules as provided in Board Policy 1A.1, Part 6, Subp. D. to allow voting on an item after one reading.

Chair Cowles asked committee members to consider the following recommended committee motion:

The Executive Committee approves the proposed amendments to the charter of the Executive Committee.

Trustee Vekich made the motion and Trustee Moe seconded. A roll call vote was conducted. The vote was as follows:

Trustee Cowles	Yes
Trustee Erlandson	Yes
Trustee Moe	Yes
Trustee Nishimura	Yes
Trustee Rodriguez	Yes
Trustee Tefer	Yes
Trustee Vekich	Yes

The committee voted to approve the recommended motion.

Agenda Item 6: Review of board manual review work

Chair Cowles invited Interim Board Director Campbell to review the proposed board manual review work. Committee members provided feedback. The meeting materials for this item begin on page 21.

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

Adjournment

The committee chair adjourned the meeting at 9:00 a.m.