

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

**Agenda Item Summary Sheet**

**Committee:** Advancement  
**Board of Trustees**

**Date of Meeting:** July 16, 2008

**Agenda Item:** Connecting with Business Initiative Update

Proposed  
Policy Change

Approvals  
Required by  
Policy

Other  
Approvals

Monitoring

Information

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

**Scheduled Presenter(s):**

Linda Kohl, associate vice chancellor for Public Affairs

Dan Foote, president, Foote & Company, marketing and advertising

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

See attached.

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

<b>INFORMATION ITEM</b>
<b>Connecting with Business Initiative Update</b>

**BACKGROUND**

In March, the Advancement Committee reviewed a proposal for an initiative called Connecting with Business. Linda Kohl, associate vice chancellor for public affairs, will update the committee on the initiative. Dan Foote, of Foote & Associates, will present findings from a series of focus groups he conducted with business executives.

The Connecting with Business proposal is attached for the committee's information.

# Connecting with Business

An initiative of the  
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees

**Purpose:** The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system produces about 33,000 graduates each year, 80 percent of whom stay in Minnesota to work or continue their education. The system also provides customized training to 6,000 employers each year and train 140,000 employees. Yet some Minnesota employers do not have strong relationships with the colleges and universities in the system. This initiative will build awareness of the services the system provides among business leaders.

## Research:

- Review past and current market research (Volkart May, iSEEK, others) and surveys of employers to determine the current awareness levels and perception among employers of the services offered by the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. Determine if further research needs to be conducted.

## Strategy and tactics:

- With the help of an outside agency, develop and implement an integrated marketing and public relations plan to build awareness among a target audience of Minnesota employers and those who influence them.
- Develop and publish, both in a publication and on the Web, a catalogue of services for employers that customized training representatives and others can use to inform business leaders about the opportunities and value the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system can bring to their organizations.
- Mobilize the 32 presidents and system leaders to make at least 10 visits each to employers to learn about their training needs and to inform them of opportunities that might benefit their organizations.
- Determine, based on research, whether additional tools and services are needed to better serve the future needs of business.

## Deliverables and timeline:

- Select a consultant and begin implementation of a sustainable integrated marketing communications campaign directed at business and opinion leaders (first phase of a three-year campaign completed by June 2008)
- Publish a print and online catalogue of services and opportunities available from the colleges and universities to employers (completed spring 2008)
- Plan and coordinate a series of visits to business and industry representatives (visits start in summer 2008, completed by December 2008)
- Enhance existing Web site for business and industry by adding Web-based tools and services (first phase completed by June 30, 2008)

**Budget:** Existing FY 2008 funds will be used for first phase. Budget for FY 2009 and 2010 to be determined based on available funds.

**Evaluation:** The success of the initiative will be measured in a number of ways, including analysis of an evaluation instrument to receive feedback from college, university and system leader visits; assessment of expectations of employers for system products and services; and increased awareness of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system among employers. The following goals will be monitored over a three-year period:

- Increase the number of new customers of system services for employers
- Increase the number of visits to business and industry-oriented Web site
- Increase number of employers visited by college, university and system leaders