

MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
JANUARY 15, 2008

Academic and Student Affairs Committee Members Present: Dan McElroy, Chair; Trustees Christine Rice, Caleb Anderson, Cheryl Dickson, Ann Curme Shaw, James Van Houten and Carol Wenner.

Academic and Student Affairs Committee Members Absent: Duane Benson

Other Board Members Present: Trustees Tom Renier, David Paskach, Scott Thiss, Clarence Hightower, David Paskach, Michael Boulton and Ruth Grendahl.

Leadership Council Committee Co-Chairs Present: Senior Vice Chancellor Linda Baer and President Ann Valentine.

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Academic and Student Affairs Committee held its meeting on Jan. 15, 2008, at Wells Fargo Place, 4th Floor, Board Room, 30 East 7th Street in St. Paul. Chair McElroy called the meeting to order at 11:23 am.

1. Approval of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

The November 13, 2007 Academic and Student Affairs Committee minutes were approved as written.

2. Academic and Student Affairs Update – Senior Vice Chancellor Baer

- Century College has won the Minnesota College Personnel Association's Innovations in Student Development Award for the GPS LifePlan. The GPS LifePlan is an online planning tool that helps students connect their educational goals with their career goals. Incoming Century College students are introduced to the GPS LifePlan at Student Orientation and Registration (SOAR) sessions.

The Minnesota College Personnel Association is a statewide organization made up of student services professionals from both public and private institutions.

- Minnesota State Colleges and Universities has been recognized for innovative and effective uses of technologies in supporting students through Minnesota Online, the System's gateway to more than 4,700 course sections and 200 programs offered via the Internet.

The Outstanding Work Award was given to system by the Western Cooperative for Education Telecommunications, an association with nearly 300 members in 46 states and nine countries. It recognizes the Minnesota Online Support Center for delivering high-quality student services, particularly to veterans and military personnel.

3. Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Work Plan - Senior Vice Chancellor Baer

Senior Vice Chancellor Baer offered an overview on the system's Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) Work Plan. This plan has the following goals for the current fiscal year:

- Increase student engagement in STEM coursework;
- Provide incentives for STEM faculty and teachers to improve students' learning outcomes;
- Develop STEM learning opportunities that meet current industry standards and needs;
- Improve the infrastructure, including facilities, equipment and supplies, for STEM programs.

STEM knowledge and competency is important for all students since it contributes to post-secondary success and opens career opportunities, Senior Vice Chancellor Baer said. For industry and the state, STEM knowledge in employees enhances a competitive advantage in a global marketplace.

A draft work plan that included the current fiscal year and some initial ideas for proposed FY 09 initiatives to meet STEM goals was reviewed according to goal areas:

1. Increase student engagement in STEM coursework

Initiatives used to increase student engagement in STEM coursework during the current fiscal year include: MentorNet, a one-on-one e-mentoring program; Project Kaleidoscope, which focuses on building learning environments that attract and sustain undergraduate students to STEM fields; STEM course enrollment grants; K-12 bioscience outreach efforts; and grants for universities to help enhance STEM teacher education.

Possible initiatives for the upcoming fiscal in this area focus on expansion of successful FY08 STEM projects.

2. Provide incentives for STEM faculty and teachers to improve student learning outcomes

Current initiative funds have been used in this area for Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) instructional development grants in STEM areas.

In the upcoming fiscal year, possible initiatives include grants for faculty projects that improve retention in developmental courses; funding projects that extend the effectiveness of prior grants; and financial incentives for STEM teacher candidates.

3. Develop STEM learning opportunities that meet current industry standards and needs

Current initiatives in this area include the creation of the “Business of Bioscience” digital learning objects repository; a multi-year bioscience internship/externship program; and Minnesota Online course development grants. Possible FY09 initiatives listed include the expansion of bioscience internship program to other STEM disciplines; and expansion of Minnesota Online grants to develop high-demand STEM courses.

4. Improve the infrastructure: facilities, equipment and supplies for STEM programs

In the past, legislative funding was used for leveraged equipment. Millions in grants for equipment were matched by industry. One possible strategy for consideration is that initiative funding be used in a similar fashion in FY09 to help institutions acquire classroom or lab equipment needed to improve student learning in STEM fields.

4. Metropolitan Area Planning Update - Senior Vice Chancellor Baer

In September 2007, the Board of Trustees received a briefing paper on the challenges facing the system in serving the growing Twin Cities metropolitan area. At that time, two conclusions were presented:

1. The Twin Cities metropolitan area has grown rapidly in recent years and forecasts predict continued future growth. The system can grow its educational capacity through additions and renovation of the 12 existing campuses, use of leased facilities and continued use of online instruction.
2. The system needs to expand upper division and graduate programming in the metropolitan area.

Because Metropolitan State University is a relatively new institution and was developed out of a non-traditional mission, it does not offer many programs that are needed in the metropolitan area. Over the years, non-metropolitan state universities have offered programs in the region to fill the gaps. There have been many instances of out-state universities forming partnerships with metropolitan two-year colleges to provide programming in the Twin Cities' area. Some programming is offered at standalone sites.

Chair McElroy said trustees will be faced with decisions pertaining to program accessibility in the metropolitan area. He said the Board could:

- allow current entrepreneurial efforts by other institutions to continue, with out-state institutions offering upper division programming at metropolitan area colleges and locations;
- adopt a more strategic plan which could involve enlarging the facilities and programming of Metropolitan State University;
- convert a current community college into a four-year institution;
- create an institution that offers only upper-division programs; or
- consider other options.

Trustee Van Houten questioned how Metropolitan State University's mission and mode of operation would be affected if the Board decided to enlarge or expand its depth of programming.

Metropolitan State University Interim President William Lowe responded that Metropolitan State has participated in the AQIP accreditation process and has successfully met all standards. He said the university ranks high in student surveys pertaining to student satisfaction and engagement. He added that the university appears to be well served by its community faculty.

Any discussion of quality should be system-based and not isolated on one institution, Trustee Paskach said.

Trustee Rice said she is concerned the proliferation of private trade schools will continue to consume the student population base in the metropolitan area if the System does not take a stronger stand on meeting the region's educational needs.

Trustee Paskach said the Board needs to remember the monetary benefits out-state institutions receive from offering their programming in the metropolitan area.

Chair McElroy said it will be necessary to bring this issue back for further discussion.

5. Mesabi Range Education Needs Study Update - Senior Vice Chancellor Baer

The 2007 Minnesota Legislature approved the funding of a study to determine student demand and employer needs for higher education in the Mesabi Range region of Northeastern Minnesota.

DMD Consulting from Grand Forks, North Dakota, a research and evaluation firm specializing in higher education, was selected to conduct the research study. It was conducted in collaboration with the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota, the University of Minnesota Duluth and the Range Association of Municipalities and Schools.

The purpose of the study is to:

- Identify current and potential future gaps in providing higher education undergraduate and graduate programs that will support key industries and economic vitality in the Mesabi Range region;
- Conduct market research to identify the current and future demand for undergraduate and graduate education in the region;
- Develop alternatives and recommendations on how regional educational needs can be met by the University of Minnesota, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, or joint degree programs.

Data has been collected through various forms; including discussions with community college student focus groups; web-based surveys of area human resource directors and community college students likely to graduate in spring 2008; telephone surveys of currently employed residents ages 25-50; paper surveys of high school seniors likely to pursue STEM related careers; and key informant interviews with post-secondary and secondary administrators, employers and human resource directors.

Key findings pertaining to potential programs showed most surveyed recommended a broad educational focus on natural resources, including engineering-related programs. The need for engineers stretches into energy, pulp and paper production, water resource management and chemical/physical related research.

Interviews with mining and power industry representatives indicated a need for skilled employees and engineers, especially since recruitment of engineers to the area tends to be difficult. Other industry survey results showed a desire that potential degree program be built on the heritage and natural resources of the area. Industry representatives surveyed said they felt education needs in the healthcare area are already being met.

The full report will be presented to legislative committees on Feb. 1, 2008.

The meeting adjourned at 12:35 pm
Respectfully submitted,
Margie Takash, Recorder