

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

Agenda Item Summary Sheet

Committee: Academic and Student Affairs **Date of Meeting:** November 18, 2008

Agenda Item: Update on Accountability Framework

Proposed Policy Change Approvals Required by Policy Other Approvals Monitoring

Information

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

The report provides an update on the development of the Board of Trustees' Accountability Framework and Dashboard.

Scheduled Presenter(s):

Linda L. Baer, Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs
Leslie K. Mercer, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and Planning

Outline of Key Points/Policy Issues:

- The Accountability Dashboard includes 10 measures for assessing system and institutional performance.
- Information is being reported on six of the ten measures while the remaining four are defined and developed.
- The dashboard, measures and related detail and documentation are available at <http://www.mnscu.edu/board/accountability/index.html>

Background Information:

The Board of Trustees adopted a report of its Ad Hoc Committee on System and Institutional Assessment in November 2007. The report included recommendations for refinements in the Board's Accountability Framework, including development and launch of an Accountability Dashboard. The dashboard was successfully launched in June 2008.

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

UPDATE ON THE ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

BACKGROUND

The Board of Trustees appointed an Ad Hoc Committee on System and Institutional Assessment to make recommendations on an updated Accountability Framework linked to the Board's 2006-2010 Strategic Plan in February, 2007. The committee included five trustees, five presidents and five system executives. The committee discussed customers for accountability, reviewed other accountability systems and consulted with Dr. Peter Ewell from the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems. Committee members also guided the development of the accountability dashboard. Finally, system stakeholders were consulted regularly during the design and development of the dashboard.

The Board of Trustees adopted a report of its Ad Hoc Committee on System and Institutional Assessment in November 2007. The report included recommendations for refinements in the Board's Accountability Framework, including development and launch of an Accountability Dashboard. The dashboard was successfully launched in June 2008.

ACCOUNTABILITY DASHBOARD

The purpose of the dashboard is twofold: first to promote continuous improvement and second to provide accountability to system stakeholders by providing an ongoing strategic assessment of system and institution performance. It is designed primarily for the Board of Trustees and other policymakers and stakeholders. Once fully developed, the dashboard will report ten important outcomes that indicate whether the system is achieving the strategic directions identified in the Board's Strategic Plan. The performance of the system and each college and university is classified in one of three categories: exceeds expectations, meets expectations, or needs attention.

EXISTING MEASURES AND DRILL-DOWNS

This update provides a progress report on the ongoing development of the Accountability Dashboard. The dashboard will ultimately report ten performance measures and include drilldown dashboards that provide detail for each measure. Data were available for six of the ten measures when the dashboard was launched.

Existing Measures: Data are being updated for the six measures that have been reported in the dashboard. Updated data on five of the six measures as well as updated comments on those measures will be added to the dashboard in the next several weeks. Updated data on the persistence and completion rate will be available in March 2009.

Drill-Down Dashboards: Drill-down dashboards have been developed and deployed for two measures: persistence and completion and licensure exam pass rates. These drill-down dashboards allow stakeholders and institutional staff to further disaggregate the data and look for patterns or trends for various sub groups. A drill-down dashboard for the tuition and fees measure is currently being developed. Several additional drill-down dashboards will be developed during fiscal year 2009.

NEW MEASURES

Work is proceeding on development of four remaining measures: student engagement, partnerships, high quality learning and innovation.

Student Engagement: Each college and university will administer a national survey of student engagement once each biennium. Eleven colleges participated in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and one university participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in fiscal year 2008. The remaining colleges and universities are participating in the surveys this fiscal year. Staff will be working to develop the measure and performance classification process this fiscal year. It is anticipated that data on the student engagement measure will be reported in the dashboard in fall 2009.

Partnerships: It is recommended that this measure assess the satisfaction of partners with college and university partnering efforts and activities. This recommendation was developed by the system's Accountability Drafting Team and has been discussed with other constituencies within the system. Data collection would be modeled on a Rochester Community and Technical College survey of its partnering organizations.

Partners would be surveyed about the nature and extent of their activities with the college or university and about their satisfaction with those activities. Partners could include employers, elementary and secondary education organizations, units of government, non-profit organizations, community and economic development organizations and others. The survey would be developed and initially administered by a survey research organization.

High Quality Learning: Several approaches for the quality measure have been discussed with the presidents, college and university academic and student affairs officers and other constituency groups. The following three approaches are under consideration:

- **Standardized Assessments** – This approach would use standardized assessments of learning that are under development or implemented through national or other external agencies. All seven state universities have committed to participate in the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) sponsored by two public university associations. VSA participants must use one of three standardized learning assessments and report results publicly. The recent

reauthorization of the federal Carl Perkins Act requires institutions that receive funds under the act to measure technical skill attainment.

The system high quality measure would be an index of the results of these assessments. The advantage of this approach is that it would utilize existing standardized assessments. Existing instruments, however, may not be available for all fields of study and may or may not capture the knowledge and skills that the system and institutions hope to achieve.

- **Specify and Align Knowledge and Skills** – This approach would specify the knowledge and skills that graduates at each credential level in each field of study would possess at graduation. The expectations would be aligned across institutions, programs and disciplines. This approach is based on the Bologna Process that is being used in Europe to align graduates' knowledge and skill requirements across more than forty countries.

While attractive as an ultimate goal, this option requires a major and long term commitment to agree upon common outcomes and to create institutional or system assessment strategies based on those outcomes.

- **Learning Assessment Process Measure** – This approach would measure the extent to which each college and university's assessments of learning outcomes comply with a common set of process standards. The standards would be developed to reflect national best practices. While assessing process is not an ideal or robust measure of high quality learning, this method could serve as a near term option since the other options would take several years to develop and implement.

Innovation: This measure is the most challenging to develop because of the varied nature of innovation. Efforts have focused on reviewing the literature on innovation and studying how firms, industries and not-for-profit organizations define and measure innovation. One option being considered is the development of a qualitative measure that would characterize the varied nature and extent of innovation within the system.

Staff will continue the efforts to develop and refine these four measures and continue to consult with system constituencies to insure broad input into the process. The next progress report will be presented to the Board's Academic and Student Affairs Committee in June 2009.