The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Academic and Student Affairs Committee and Finance, Facilities and Technology Committee held a joint meeting on Feb. 12, 2009, at Wells Fargo Place, 4th Floor, Board Room, 30 East 7th Street in St. Paul. Chair Renier called the session to order at 12:45 pm.

1. **Board of Trustees Awards for Excellence in Teaching**

   The Board of Trustees annually presents Awards for Excellence in Teaching to selected faculty as a way to acknowledge and reward superior teaching and exceptional professional accomplishment.

   Senior Vice Chancellor Baer asked Trustees if they felt it would be appropriate to tone down the ceremony this year because of the economy. In the past, the ceremony has been at Minneapolis Community and Technical College and every campus award winner was invited to attend.

   Trustees agreed to honor the three top award winners again this year, but without the ceremonial expense. The winners will receive a monetary award and will be formally recognized during an upcoming Board meeting and celebratory lunch.
Trustee Dickson said even if the ceremony is not as lavish as it has been in the past, it is important for the Board to take time to praise and congratulate the award winners for their teaching expertise.

2. **FY 2010-2011 Budget Implications for Strategic Plan**

The System Strategic Plan and annual action plan serves as a primary means for Board Trustees to identify strategic priorities and make allocation decisions.

Initiatives related to Reaching the Underrepresented, increasing students enrolled in Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programs and supporting regional prosperity by enhancing workforce education and training opportunities are included as areas of emphasis/performance measurement in the 2010 Action plan.

Recent system emphasis on online learning and organizational restructuring to meet future challenges, increase efficiency and remove barriers to innovation are proposed additions to the 2010 Action Plan.

Colleges and universities will be asked to offer feedback on their capacity to advance and respond to action plan priorities in light of current economic challenges. That feedback will be incorporated into the fiscal year 2010 operating budgets that the Board will review and take action on in June or July 2009.

Senior Vice Chancellor Baer said she and Vice Chancellor King think it would be helpful for Trustees to indicate if they have priorities when it comes to strategic plan initiatives, so institutions can take those into consideration when doing budget planning.

Presidents would appreciate such feedback, or at least some affirmation that it will be acceptable to make adjustments to the achievement expected on action plan goals, President Wynia said.

Trustee Dickson said presidents should not be expected to do everything while experiencing severe funding cuts. It is understandable if priorities need to be shuffled.

Trustee Hightower agreed. He said if the system is not able to afford to advance goals, then presidents need to be sent the message that they will not be held accountable to standards previously set.

Trustee Renier said determining priorities may be difficult since the Board does not have a thorough understanding of the relative monetary implications that advancing these priorities would have on institutional operating budgets.
Vice Chancellor King said rather than abandoning goals, it may be an issue of pace. Achievement of some goals may not be at the pace previously expected, and some goals now may receive more attention that others.

Trustee McElroy agreed with that sentiment. He said the system should continue to promote a strategic plan, even thought the economy may cause a change in that direction.

Trustee Thiss asked if advancing the action plan priorities will force institutions to stop doing other things.

Senior Vice Chancellor Baer said that is possible, since many of the goals have budget implications. Enhancing e-learning or promoting efforts to reach the under-represented, for example, would require financial investments.

President Wynia asked about core mission and organization integrity. She said at her campus there is not a lot of “fluff” left in the budget. Will there be relief in the areas of core mission or organization integrity if attention needs to be given to strategic goals?

Chair McElroy said maintaining organizational integrity doesn’t necessarily mean maintaining the status quo. Institutions can still meet core missions and maintain organizational integrity, but it may require changes in the way services are provided.

Trustees said they would be comfortable with receiving initial budget documents that offer basic information on how the attainment of identified action plan goals at each institution will be affected by tight economic conditions. It was agreed that it would be beneficial if presidents could indicate what they may have to stop doing if priority is given to making progress on goals.

Responding to a request by Trustee Hightower, Vice Chancellor King said she would provide information on the overall direction the system is moving on the strategic plan.

The meeting adjourned at 1:23 pm
Respectfully submitted,
Margie Takash, Recorder