

**MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING OF ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS
AND FINANCE, FACILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY
MEETING MINUTES
September 8, 2009**

***Members Present:** Dan McElroy and Thomas Renier, Co-Chairs, Trustees Cheryl Dickson, Christopher Frederick, Clarence Hightower, Christine Rice, Scott Thiss, Dan McElroy, Thomas Renier, Duane Benson, James Van Houten and Jacob England*

***Other Trustees Present:** Ruth Grendal, David Olson, Louise Sudin, Terri Thomas, Gail Olson,*

***Others Present:** President Richard Davenport, President Patrick Johns, Vice Chancellor Laura King, Senior Vice Chancellor Linda Baer, Director Jim Dillemath, Director John O'Brien*

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees held a joint meeting of the Academic and Student Affairs and Finance, Facilities and Technology Committees on September 8, 2009, at Wells Fargo Place, 4th Floor, Board Room, 30 East 7th Street in St. Paul. Chair Renier called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

1. FINANCE, FACILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY UPDATE (*Information*)

Vice Chancellor King reported that the CFOs were surveyed as to their plans to use general or ARRA funds to offer scholarship programs for a specific student population (i.e., unemployed, etc.). Four colleges indicated plans to use a small portion of the funds for limited tuition relief/scholarship programs. Detail will be provided as a part of the Fiscal Year 2011 budget materials. Both Minneapolis Community and Technical College and Normandale have discontinued programs of "free tuition" for unemployed students.

The most recent Capital Improvement Program status report was sent on July 22, 2009 (after the July Board meeting) and is now available on the web site.

Legislative visits are now being planned, beginning with the Senate on September 1 at Rochester Community and Technical; September 2 at South Central College, Faribault, and September 3 at Dakota County Technical College and Metro State; these visits will continue to run through October. The House schedule begins on October 6.

The audit season is underway and going well. Board members should be aware that there have been reports of thin staffing at certain campuses and at the System Office.

The System All Hazards Steering Committee is meeting regularly and communicating with the colleges and universities about their plans in the event of an

H1N1 influenza outbreak. The Board can expect to receive regular communication about this issue in the months ahead.

Fall enrollment numbers are up above projections. The final enrollment increase cannot be accurately reported on yet because the drop/add period continues for 10 days after the start of the semester; but enrollment is expected to increase about 4%. Additional information will be available in a few weeks. Trustee Benson inquired if an estimate on the enrollment increase was available. Vice Chancellor King responded that the projected increase was fewer than 2%; however, a larger increase is expected. An enrollment report showing individual campuses the will be available in a few weeks.

Vice Chancellor King stated that the 2010 bonding book was sent out to the Board members. This document will be useful for preparing for the legislative campus visits. Trustee Von Houten responded that this document was well prepared.

2. **Students First Initiative**

Vice Chancellor King began the presentation with a reminder of the infrastructure commitment and plan that the Board adopted in the spring of 2006. The Enterprise Investment Strategic Plan contained a series of findings and recommendations based on three long range enterprise investment goals. The first was to achieve and sustain high levels of system availability, data security and user support; the second was to accelerate the enhancement, expansion and integration of enterprise systems and the third was to improve ITS and systemwide efficiencies by utilizing available IT resources. The first stage of this plan recognized the need for an investment in the system's infrastructure which includes increased storage and capacity, a strong statewide network, data conversion and identity and access management. Since this work began in 2007, the Board has paid close attention to the progress on these initiatives. Most of the major changes are nearly complete.

The second stage of the strategic plan (contemplated beginning in 2009) is represented by Students First. The targeted work is critical if the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system is to remain competitive in the modern higher education market place. Vice Chancellor King expressed excitement about this effort and recognized that this is a daunting management effort. If is the projects are to succeed they will need Board support, along with the support of presidents, staff and students. The Students First presentation will include the principles that will guide this effort including the following:

- *Existing policies and procedures will be assessed for the capacity to support comprehensive, integrated services. The business and service design will lead. Application development will support the design. Requisite policies, procedures, guidelines, and management decisions will support design decisions.*

Time will be spent imagining the future and how technology will support it. Policy and procedures are needed to support this vision of the future and will be developed.

- *Operational efficiency will be achieved through shared services where effective and efficient.*

Opportunities will be identified to leverage the power of the system to share services to improve the experience of students and staff through effective development of technology. The infrastructure investments made in the last few years put the system in a position to move forward.

Everyone's best efforts are needed in order to achieve these objectives. When this is successful, transformational change will be achieved. This will be another step toward the vision that was contemplated when this organization was created fifteen years ago. With that Vice Chancellor King turned the discussion over to Senior Vice Chancellor Baer, who introduced Dr. John O'Brien.

Senior Vice Chancellor Baer stated that the challenge ahead is to balance using a systematic approach to leverage the power of a strategic system by building on the distinctive strengths of the campuses. The Board has requested that any policies or procedures that act as barriers for the students should be brought to them. Dr. O'Brien will serve as the project director for the Students First initiative. Dr. O'Brien who has both Office of the Chancellor and campus experience, including one year as the acting president at Century College, comes with the technical knowledge to direct this effort.

Dr. O'Brien stated that the idea of "students first" is not new; the Office of the Chancellor and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities have always put students first. In fact, a December, 1996 press release announced the Board of Trustees initiative called "putting students first. As things have changed in the last fifteen years the way we demonstrate our commitment to students might also change.

Dr. O'Brien presented the information from the PowerPoint presentation prepared for Board of Trustees noting the following:

- Academic and Student Affairs and Finance are the co-leaders of this effort given the inter-dependencies of the issues. Information Technology is also a key player in that improved infrastructure capacities and the related Students First action plan priorities rely on IT capacities.
- There invariably will be policy and procedure revisions to consider and implement.
- Students are engaged.
- There is a need for an engaged and supportive IT unit to help in implementation.

- There is a need for full discussion among stake holders.

Dr. O'Brien provided a high-level introduction to the six projects which comprise the Students First program:

- Single Search
- Single Application
- Graduation Planner
- Single Registration
- Single Bill/Single Payment
- Shared Services.

Minnesota State College Student Association (MSCSA) and Minnesota State University Student Association (MSUSA), the two statewide student organizations, are in strong support of "Students First." These groups are actively interested in staying involved in the projects.

When consulting with campus stakeholders at the Cross-Functional Advisory Group meeting in early August, concerns were raised about the natural tension between providing a more consistent experience for students while respecting individual campus traditions and culture. It will be important to be sensitive to this tension. On the other hand the students have very clearly expressed that they seek:

- Similar procedures related to financial aid, registration, and so on, at all colleges and universities.
- Easy access to curriculum from other colleges and universities from any system campus.
- Clear and accessible transfer and co-enrollment.
- Ability to receive and pay a single bill from multiple colleges or universities.

The students did not believe that achieving consistency would happen at the expense of the integrity of the "home" campus.

Dr. O'Brien noted that the Chancellor has expressed support for the Students First initiative. The Chancellor has also made clear that the completion of this initiative, as it is defined through the Enterprise Investment Committee approval process, is targeted for the the end of Fiscal Year 2011.

Dr. O'Brien has made a commitment to the Board and the campuses to communicate regularly on the status of Students First. Information is available at www.studentsfirst.project.mnscu.edu.

Dr. O'Brien thanked campus leaders, because in these tough times with thinning staff and increased enrollment, the system will be asking them to allow their best

and brightest staff to participate in this effort. It will be a challenge to get the right people together.

Dr. O'Brien has indicated that Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document will be developed to answer many of the questions raised by constituents. In addition to this, Students First will be a standing item on the Leadership Council Finance and Administration and Academic and Student Affairs Committee agendas.

Chair McElroy of the Academic and Student Affairs committee yielded time for further discussion of Student First because of its importance and suggested that the Board hear some initial questions and plan for further discussion.

Chair Renier indicated that the committee would take an additional five or ten minutes for questions and requested that the staff find the time for further discussion. It is understood that there are issues with the policies and procedures, but if these cannot move forward the system will be forever behind the students' expectations. Vice Chancellor King indicated that time for additional discussion will be arranged.

Trustee Hightower inquired if there is much intensity in the discussion relative to campus autonomy. Dr. O'Brien responded that the discussions at the Cross Functional Advisory group could be described as intense. At the Interfaculty Organization executive cabinet meeting Dr. O'Brien heard concerns about campus autonomy as well. As these projects move forward, campus participation will be critical in addressing the concerns about autonomy.

Trustee Sudin inquired if Students First can address the needs of Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) students. Dr. O'Brien responded that once the changes in policy and technology are made it will be possible to address PSEO as it will be a natural extension.

Trustee Hightower requested information on the types of policy changes that may be expected. Vice Chancellor King responded that an example can be found in the work that went into changing the policy involving drop for nonpayment dates which was a precursor to smoothing out the variances in campus policies, procedures and practices. The campuses had different dates that students were dropped which made registration and financial aid at multiple institutions impossible for students.

Senior Vice Chancellor Baer stated that currently the system does not recognize students who are enrolled at multiple institutions; this does not allow the students to have access to resources like library identification and copying rights. This issue has nothing to do with campus identity or the quality of the educational opportunities provided but instead aspects of back office processes.

Trustee Rice inquired if the delivery of courses should be discussed at a policy level. What would be the impact of a Minnesota State Colleges and Universities online campus? Would this credit awarding institution improve delivery and opportunities? Vice Chancellor King indicated that the Board has discussed this issue repeatedly in the past; however this topic can be brought back to the Board. Chair McElroy stated that it is important that when this issue comes before the Board that the trustees weigh in on the issue of the system and the autonomy of the institutions. The Chancellor and others need to be given a chance to create a strong system. This culture change is not about technology; it will not take place easily. Chair Reiner stated the reliability and the security portion of the IT advancements are not in play.

Trustee Hightower noted that if there is a need for a culture, change it might benefit the Board to meet in a joint committee or study session to help facilitate change. Trustee Reiner stated that joint sessions would be both helpful and advisable, and noted that the further discussion of Students First at the November Board meeting may be beneficial. Vice Chancellor King indicated that a study session could be added to the November agenda.

Trustee McElroy shared information from the US Department of Labor and the US Department of Education which weighed in on this issue in the form of a report on working learners. The report calls for greater integration including changes to registration to allow program rather than semester registration and recommended that the federal government allocate five hundred million dollars. This grant money would be available nationally to help implement program registration.

Trustee Reiner stated that this discussion on Students First has provided a course for future meetings and adjourned the meeting at 10:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine Benner, Recorder