

**MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
STUDY SESSION
NOVEMBER 13, 2007**

Board of Trustee Members Present: David Olson, Chair; Trustees Caleb Anderson, Duane Benson, Cheryl Dickson, Ruth Grendahl, Clarence Hightower, Dan McElroy, David Paskach, Thomas Renier, Christine Rice, Ann Curme Shaw, Scott Thiss, James Van Houten and Carol Wenner.

Board Member Absent: Trustee Michael Boulton.

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees held a Study Session on Nov. 13, 2007, at Wells Fargo Place, 4th Floor, Board Room, 30 East 7th Street in St. Paul. Chair Olson called the session to order at 1:03 pm.

The Board of Trustees met in Study Session to review and discuss the Ad Hoc Committee on System and Institutional Assessment's recommendations pertaining to Accountability Framework and Reporting.

Presenters:

Ann Curme Shaw, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee
Linda L. Baer, Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs
Leslie M. Mercer, Associate Vice Chancellor for Planning and Research
Craig Schoenecker, System Director for Research

Trustee Shaw introduced the topic by giving a brief history on the System's development of the Accountability Framework. The Board of Trustees created the first Accountability Framework in 2003 to assess progress in meeting planning objectives, statutory requirements and other expectations. The Framework at that time encompassed 12 indicators and 31 measures.

In February 2007, the Board identified improving information about performance, especially about academic quality, as a priority challenge for the System. Then Board Chair David Paskach appointed an Ad Hoc Committee on System and Institutional Assessment to make recommendations to the full Board on an updated Accountability Framework linked to the Boards's 2006-2010 Strategic Plan.

The committee, which had five trustees, five presidents and five senior leaders from the Office of the Chancellor, began its work in April 2007. They were charged with:

- Reviewing and evaluating the Board Accountability Framework and other processes and indicators on performance, including accreditation, used by the System and other higher education institutions and systems.

- Identifying key indicator areas, aligned with the System’s strategic plan, that provide a comprehensive scorecard for System and institutional performance in meeting the goals to: increase access and opportunity; promote and measure high-quality learning programs and services; provide programs and services integral to state and regional economic needs; and innovate to meet current and future education needs efficiently.
- Recommending a reporting system that effectively presents a System and institutional-level performance measurement, published in easy-to-understand formats, and available online to policymakers, students, parents, internal stakeholders and the public.
- Endorsing a process for promoting and monitoring performance improvement such as comparisons to System targets or peers, benchmarks, or historical trends.

The Ad Hoc Committee met five times and consulted with Dr. Peter Ewell, Vice President of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems. Dr. Ewell offered constructive suggestions on the development of the scorecard.

System stakeholders were consulted regularly during the design and drafting of the scorecard. Drafts were developed by a team of staff, faculty and student representatives from the colleges, universities and Office of the Chancellor. The Leadership Council provided advice on scorecard issues. The System’s Institutional Research Director’s Group provided advice on establishing thresholds, data sources and measure definitions.

Once drafted, the scorecard design and measures were presented for review and feedback to 11 System stakeholder groups. The student and employee groups included representatives of the college and university student and faculty associations and the state university administrative faculty association. System and institutional leadership groups asked to participate included the Leadership Council, Chief Academic and Student Affairs Offices and deans from the colleges and universities. The drafting team, the institutional research directors and staff of the Minnesota Office of Higher Education were also consulted. Finally, 60 participants at the System’s Academic and Student Affairs’ annual fall conference attended hand-on sessions to pilot test the scorecard

The scorecard has 10 key measures, aligned with the System’s strategic plan, that provide a focused evaluation of System and institutional performance. The ultimate purpose of the scorecard is to promote continuous improvement and to provide accountability to System stakeholders.

Research System Director Craig Schoenecker demonstrated the scorecard and its applications to the Board of Trustees. The scorecard’s basic display consists of a series of dials for the 10 measures. The dials are color-coded to show whether performance on the measure exceeds expectations, meets expectations or needs attention according to the threshold standards described. Users will be able to select whether they want to view results for the system as a whole, for colleges or universities as separate groups or for an individual institution.

There are additional features which can be selected by the user to offer additional measurement definitions, data and related information.

There needs to be continuing discussions and modifications to the scorecard, such as how high quality learning or innovation should be measured, Trustee Shaw said. But overall, she said she is excited by the potential of the scorecard and said she could see it becoming a nationwide model.

The fact that the scorecard aligns with the System’s strategic plan and is not excessively complex is good, Trustee Rice said. She predicted the scorecard will be valuable to parents and students considering enrolling in System institutions.

Trustee Paskach said he could not envision a better scorecard than this when he formed the committee. He said the scorecard is a cutting-edge product and will speak volumes in showing that the System is not satisfied with the status quo and strives for continuous improvement.

Calling the scorecard an innovative way to look at data, Trustee Wenner said she looks forward to using it. Trustee Dickson suggested that former members of the Board of Trustees be notified when the scorecard goes public since many of them played a role in its development.

Associate Vice Chancellor Mercer said she has been contacted by Dr. Ewell, who asked if he can include the scorecard in an update he is preparing for an educational journal on assessment.

The Ad Hoc committee recommended that the Board of Trustees accept the design of the System scorecard and allow for further work to complete the content development and refine the displays during the next four months. A decision about when the scorecard will become available to the public online will be made by the Board in March 2008.

To allow the Board, the Office of the Chancellor and institutions a chance to become familiar with the data on the scorecard and the context for performance, the committee also recommended that the first year of operation be a “rehearsal year.”

Following the rehearsal year, the committee recommended that the Board use the results to open up conversations about the best practices that produced exemplary results and the underlying causes of unsatisfactory results. Trustees discussed the meaning and purpose of the rehearsal year; they emphasized that it did not mean that results would not be public for a year. Trustee Shaw suggested that the motion clearly state the intent to make the scorecard available publicly in a few months. Trustee McElroy suggested language for the motion.

Trustee Shaw made a motion to suspend the procedural rules in order to allow consideration of an action item by the Board. The motion was seconded by Trustee Rice. Motion carried.

Recommended Motion

Trustee Shaw made a motion, seconded by Trustee Rice, to accept the following motion:

The Board of Trustees accepts the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on System and Institutional Assessment for:

- *Ten key measures, aligned with the System’s strategic plan, that provide a focused scorecard for system and institutional performance,*
- *A process for establishing performance thresholds that permit comparisons to System targets, external benchmarks, and expected value, or historical trends, and*
- *A reporting system that will present System and institutional level performance in easy-to-understand formats and available to anyone on the system Web site.*

The Board directs the Academic and Student Affairs Committee to monitor and provide direction on further development of the scorecard and report to the Board in March, 2008. It is the intention of the Board to make the scorecard available for public use, absent serious problems or challenges, as soon as practical thereafter.

Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 2:15 pm
Respectfully submitted,
Margie Takash, Recorder