

**MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
BOARD MAJOR TOPIC DISCUSSION ON 2020 PLANNING
DECEMBER 11, 2008**

Board of Trustee Members Present: Chair David Olson, Trustees Ruth Grendahl, Duane Benson, Cheryl Dickson, Clarence Hightower, Dan McElroy, Christine Rice, Terri Thomas, Scott Thiss and Louise Sundin.

Board Members Absent: Trustees Jacob Englund, Allyson Lueneburg, David Paskach, Thomas Renier and James Van Houten.

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees held a Major Topic Discussion on Dec. 11, 2008, at Wells Fargo Place, 4th Floor, Board Room, 30 East 7th Street in St. Paul. Trustee Rice called the session to order at 10:10 am.

The Board of Trustees requested the opportunity to advance their 2020 planning discussion during a special meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Presenters:

James McCormick, Chancellor

Linda L. Baer, Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs

Patrick Johns, President, Anoka-Ramsey Community College

Chancellor McCormick said the Trustees would be presented with a draft of a system plan offering bold statements and goals to meet the challenges of 2020. He said the plan, which could be called a visionary blueprint, stays within the confines of the system's strategic plan. It is visionary, but realistic in content.

The Chancellor told the Trustees that the presentation was meant to stimulate discussion and solicit suggestions on the plan, which focuses on student-centered success. There will be opportunities in the future to consult with key stakeholder groups, including business and industry, students and faculty, on the plan.

Senior Vice Chancellor Linda Baer said by 2020, Minnesota must have a sufficiently skilled workforce to remain competitive worldwide, attract new business and industry and to continue its high quality of life for the next generation. To meet this challenge, the system must be fast, flexible and focused.

President Johns summarized what a fast, flexible and focused system could mean for students:

- More Minnesota high school graduates will be ready for post-secondary education;
- Higher education will be available to anyone with the ability, regardless of financial constraints;

- Academic achievement gaps among underrepresented groups will be reduced substantially;
- A two year degree will replace the high school diploma as the generally-expected level of attainment;
- Courses and programs will be more convenient and accessible;
- Certificate and degree programs will be offered in compact components along seamless career paths.

Senior Vice Chancellor Baer summarized what it could mean for workers:

- WorkSmart Centers will provide fast-track credit and noncredit courses for advancement or retraining;
- Adults who have dropped out of college will return and complete their programs;
- A credential in soft skills will prepare entry-level workers for the world of work;
- Credit for work-related learning;
- Applied research and customized training will spur innovation and efficiency.

Chancellor McCormick presented what it could mean for state employees:

- A culture of continuous innovation will be enabled throughout the system;
- Faculty and staff will use new diagnostic and technological tools to improve student success;
- Greater use of “green” environmental practices will increase sustainability;
- New inter-institutional arrangements will support seamless administration and educational pathways.

For the state, Chancellor McCormick said it could mean:

- Systems colleges, universities and graduates will enrich the state’s cultural and civic assets;
- Higher education programs will be delivered where they are needed, which includes accommodating the population growth in the metropolitan area without shortchanging rural areas;
- Strategic investments by public and private partners will support public higher education;

Trustee Dickson said the draft plan contains some breathtaking changes. She said she would like to see a bold statement pertaining to the need for the P-12 school system to be a strong partner in ensuring new high school graduates are ready to meet the challenges of post-secondary education.

President Johns said a bold move may be to tighten admission standards in the future to ensure students who are admitted are academically ready. But, he added, care would need to be taken to ensure that admission standards would not hamper the system’s goal of graduating enough students to meet the state’s workforce needs.

Trustee Benson said he would like to see the plan contain some bold ideas, and he made a suggestion pertaining to funding. If money were channeled directly to the student, higher

education would have to compete for that funding and that would force changes and promote accountability, he said.

Chair Olson said while several of the goals mentioned are laudable, they are not reachable and should not be included in the plan. For example, saying adults who have dropped out of college will return and complete their program is a worthy goal, but there is no way for the system to ensure that will happen. Saying higher education will be available to anyone with the ability, regardless of financial constraints, is another admirable, but unattainable, goal, he said.

Trustee McElroy said he would like to see the plan include specific statements pertaining to the containment of costs. For example, tuition has not increased more than the cost of inflation.

The system will need to be realistic when forming its plans for the future because of the state's current financial situation, Chair Olson said. For example, corporations and businesses may be limited in the ways they can invest in or partner with the system.

Trustee Hightower said he agrees that many of the goals are worthy and additional efforts are needed in many areas, especially when it comes to overcoming achievement gaps for underrepresented groups, but he said he is struggling with ways to achieve those goals.

All the visions outlined in the draft plan may not be attainable, but work on the plan had already begun before the current financial crisis was realized, Chancellor McCormick said. He added that he continues to hold out hope that the state's corporations and businesses, even though they are struggling through terrible financial times, will see partnerships with the system as a necessity to remain economically viable in the global economy of 2020.

Chair Olson said planning for the year 2020 can continue, but it should be done with the understanding that the system likely will be forced to serve more students and provide a better product with fewer resources. He said it is time for the system to be prudent.

A crisis such as the one the state and system faces may be the right time to take bold actions, Trustee Sundin said. Being bold and reaching beyond the current paradigm may be the best way to achieve some of the goals.

Trustee Dickson said she doesn't want to drop plans for 2020. Perhaps the board could concentrate on one bold initiative – such as working with the K-12 system to conflate 12th grade and the first year of college. This would result in people getting degrees quicker at less cost.

It is hard to set a course for the future while dealing with acute economic challenges, Trustee Thiss said. He suggested that the 2020 plan discussion be postponed while they deal with immediate budget concerns.

Trustee Rice agreed the state's financial situation may force them to be flexible as the finalization of the plan proceeds. She invited Trustees to share comments on the plan with staff during the next week.

While acknowledging that staff can work on tightening the plan, Chancellor McCormick said he does not want to lose sight of where the system needs to be in 2020. The state's high quality of life and ability to stay globally competitive will be in trouble if it is not able to maintain a talented, skilled workforce, he said.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 am
Respectfully submitted,
Margie Takash, Recorder