

March 18, 2009

TO: MSU Faculty, Staff, Student Leaders, and Board Members

FROM: David Fuller

SUBJECT: ¹Monthly President's Report

Current Topics, Issues, and Proposals

House Appropriation Committee Testimony on March 5

We presented to the House Appropriations Committee from 9-10:30 a.m. on March 5. A formal booklet was distributed and the following points presented during our hearing, which included a review of the institutional mission and vision, institutional goals and strategies for Vision 2013, Roundtable goals, university achievements and a Cornerstone progress report overview, and a review of enrollment trends and challenges. We discussed our plans to address future enrollment trends, including the Grow North Dakota and Enrollment Management plans. A review of the proposed budget for Minot State included an examination of the lines for parity, equity, deferred maintenance, and capital projects. Specific points emphasized included:

- Emphasis on need to retain the 5% average salary increase and not reduce the amount.
- Need for continued deferred maintenance support.
- An amendment to request an additional \$5.125 million to complete the Swain renovation.
- A request to retain the \$2.5 million capital project support to refurbish the main coal boiler
- A brief explanation of the efforts to investigate a geothermal alternative energy option.
- An overview of the Health and Wellness Center building project, and
- A note of appreciation for the support received from the Legislature

Swain Hall

During the House Appropriations Hearing, we explained the significant cost increases in the renovation project. The recent bids showed that the estimated figure of \$7 million approved in 2005 had increased to \$13.1 million. An amendment was introduced by Representative Matt Klein to increase the appropriation by \$4 million and to transfer \$1.25 million from the coal boiler project to Swain. According to the proposal, the remainder of the building renovation cost of approximately \$900,000 would be made up by the university and fund raising.

¹ The President's Report is a monthly summary of activities in the president's office and current issues affecting the campus. It is distributed widely to keep the community up to date on current initiatives and decisions. The report is provided at the monthly meeting of the University Cabinet, an advisory council comprised of all directors, vice presidents, and senate presidents. This report is distributed electronically to all faculty and staff, student leaders, the Board of Regents, Foundation Board of Directors, and Alumni Board. The report is also posted on the university's web site. Anyone interested in learning more about this information may contact the President's Office or the president directly.

Main Coal Boiler

The current proposal for the boiler is to use the remaining \$2.5 million (after the transfer of \$1.25 million to Swain) to refurbish the existing boiler. The engineers have indicated that this solution would not be a long-term one, and the refurbished boiler would likely need to be replaced in 6-10 years. A new boiler project at this point is estimated to cost approximately \$10 million. To refurbish and not replace with a new boiler is the option we are pursuing at this point unless an alternative energy solution is feasible. It is unlikely that support for a new boiler could be provided at this point.

Investigation of Geothermal System

Minot State has been investigating the feasibility of a partial or full-geothermal upgrade to the campus. In view of the high cost of a new main coal boiler and our university's stated responsibility to sustainability and our environment, we have undertaken this study to determine if our campus is suited for geothermal systems and to understand better the costs and potential energy and financial savings.

Arizona Alumni Meetings

Recently I returned from Arizona and the scheduled MSU alumni events. We had the opportunity to meet with individuals and to participate in a variety of events. Friends and alumni of MSU attended these meetings and appreciated the opportunity to learn more about initiatives and projects on our campus.

Health and Wellness Center student fee approval

The MSU Student Government Association recently considered a proposal to increase student fees to support a new Health and Wellness Center. The students unanimously approved the proposal after hearing presentations from the center's architects about the building and the scope of functions. We certainly appreciate the students' strong support and interest in a new center.

Stimulus Funding

Minot State University has kept updated on the potential for stimulus support for current projects on campus. One potential project that is aligned well with stimulus criteria is an alternative energy project. With our issues with our main coal boiler and those high costs, we have studied closely the potential for federal support for the geothermal upgrade on campus (see above). A proposal was developed and submitted to the North Dakota Department of Commerce seeking support for a geothermal system. Other projects have been studied as well for potential support, such as Swain, the Health Center, the renovation of the Community Bowl, and opening 11th Avenue.

Monument Sign

The bids have been accepted to proceed with the construction of the new MSU monument sign for the corner of University and Broadway. We are anticipating that the construction will begin in late April and the sign completed in September or October. The Board of Regents has designated some funds to support the construction. Our Advancement Office is also seeking support from private donors as well.

Funding approval for Earmark projects

Minot State University was pleased to learn that our earmark proposals (autism project in NDCPD, rural meth education program in RCJC, the Job Corps Executive Management program in the College of Business) have recently been approved by Congress and President Obama. While there are some people who express strong criticisms about earmarks, which is commonly referred to deleteriously as “pork” projects, the fact remains that our delegation works diligently to seek support for very meaningful projects that offer significant benefits to our university and the state at large. Earmark projects in our state, with our small population and presumed geographic isolation, provide us with much needed federal research support. Often the critics refer to bridges to nowhere to generalize about the problems with earmarks, but the projects our delegation introduces are of the highest quality and with the greatest payback to the citizens of North Dakota. I want to extend my sincere thanks to Senator Dorgan, Senator Conrad, and Representative Pomeroy for their willingness to go to bat to support these projects for the state.

Community Bowl

Recently we held a meeting with city officials to discuss the potential for moving ahead on the community bowl project. There is a considerable amount of interest and good reasons for the welfare of our region to develop a community bowl.

Departmental Review of Performance Indicators

Faculty and staff from all departments and administrative units are currently reviewing the performance indicators for the ten premier Great Plains aspiration universities with whom we are comparing our own institutional performances. Specific indicators for each school and the average rating for the ten schools are being used to determine what objectives Minot State University should identify. The goal is to set objectives and to work to meet and exceed the average rating for each peer university between now and 2013. Each department is reviewing these indicators and providing their suggestions about what performance indicators we should set for our own work. When compiled and reviewed, it is our intention to set these goals and to allocate resources in support of raising these performance scores. This process and many others are being pursued in response to our institutional goal to become one of the premier, regional universities in the ‘great’ Great Plains.

Name Change Proposal for MSU-Bottineau

Following a two-year, all-inclusive study and effort to exam the institutional name, MSU-Bottineau has concluded from their research that the current name should be changed. The current name is confusing to prospective students, it appears to misrepresent the nature of the two-year school, and it does not provide a necessary distinctiveness. After reviewing the data and the results of their study, I fully support their proposal. A name change in no way will affect the relationship between Minot State and MSU-Bottineau. In fact, I anticipate it will enhance and strengthen the relationship. Regardless of name, I will remain president of both MSU and MSU-Bottineau. The House and Senate have voted to approve the name. The new name, Dakota College at Bottineau, will go into effect in the fall if the Governor approves.

List of Selected Activities and Events in President's Office (since February 18, 2009)

February

- Meeting with Education Officers at MAFB to discuss program and new directions
- Planning and Budgeting Council meeting
- News conference to show Fox's Economic Report featuring MSU
- Chancellor's Cabinet meeting
- SRT President
- Discussion regarding potential geothermal upgrade to campus
- Hosted community meeting with Rep Pomeroy to discuss Stimulus funding
- Center of Excellence meeting
- President's Staff weekly meetings
- MADC Annual Meeting Luncheon
- Meeting with president of Student Government Association
- Discussion with local legislators about MSU budget and projects
- Student Government Association meeting with the Wellness Center architects to review funding
- Preparation of House Appropriations Booklet
- Trinity Board of Directors meeting
- Faculty Senate president meeting
- DAC Conference basketball playoff game in Dickinson
- Latin American Carnival Day Celebration
- Faculty Senate
- Donald Mosser retirement open house
- International Faculty Association meeting
- Presentation of Budget to House Appropriations committee in Bismarck
- Employee Recognition Luncheon
- Alumni Events in Arizona
- Convention and Visitor's Bureau Annual Meeting
- President's Staff meetings
- Chancellor's Cabinet meeting
- Presented testimony to the House Education Committee regarding MSU-Bottineau name-change proposal
- MSU Concert Choir recital
- MSU Winter Band Concert: Pride of Minot
- Meeting to discuss students' engagement in athletic events on campus
- Staff Senate president
- Meeting with teacher education faculty
- Hosted dinner at home for president and vice president of the Student Government Association and two Danish exchange students from partner institution Aalborg University in Denmark
- Center of Excellence meeting
- Minot Area Development Corporation Board meeting
- Attended presentation: Wotach; Spiritual Leader to Crazy Horse
- Chancellor's Cabinet
- Community Bowl meeting with mayor
- Welcome to Special Olympics Opening Ceremony at Dome
- Meeting with ING administrator
- President's Staff all-day retreat (rescheduled)
- Chamber Board of Directors meeting
- Staff Senate meeting.

March

- One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest theater performance
- Board of Regents reception for legislators in Bismarck
- Luncheon with Great Plains Scholars

Concluding Remarks

This week of spring break provides students some well deserved relaxation and time away with families and friends. While students are not on campus, there doesn't appear to be much slow down in activities with the legislature and in priority projects we are pursuing for our university. Last week we held our annual Faculty and Staff Recognition Luncheon in the Dome and honored many devoted and long-time employees. The Board of Regents achievement award winners were recognized for their outstanding service as we shared in a great meal and fun program. It was also nice to visit Arizona last week and greet many friends of Minot State. We have a lot of devoted supporters who host events and attend our activities. It was pleasant to experience the beautiful weather of Arizona and then to return to what appears to be the gradual start of spring. The snow seems to be melting slowly as the temperatures rise. All of us are looking forward to the arrival of spring, the successful completion of the legislative session, and the continued efforts in support of our students and Minot State University.

David Fuller
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