

**May 20, 2009**

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

**FROM: David Fuller**

**SUBJECT: <sup>1</sup>Monthly President's Report**

### **Current Topics, Issues, and Proposals**

#### Legislature: SB 2003

The higher education bill was passed and includes authorization for 5%/5% salary increases, equity funding, affordability dollars to help keep our tuition low, support for deferred maintenance and security, and approval for one-time renovation costs for Swain and for our coal boiler. We appreciate the support of the North Dakota Legislature, Governor Hoeven, and most of our local legislators, particularly Karen Krebsbach and Matt Klein, who both worked hard and successfully on our behalf.

#### Solar Energy RFI

The Department of Education and Department of Energy distributed requests for information regarding a solar research and dissemination project. Minot State University, the University of North Dakota, and Minot State University—Bottineau responded to the request. We intend to submit a full proposal in response to the RFP when it is received. This project provides for solar demonstration sites and seeks partners in a collaborative center to research and distribute information on the technology.

#### Title IV Grant Consultant and Proposal

We contracted with William Campbell from the University of Wisconsin at River Falls to visit campus, interview faculty, staff, and students, and identify appropriate projects to include in a Title IV federal Student Support Services grant. These grants provide up to \$250,000 per year for five years to support eligible students in need of special support (i.e., first generation students, disabled, and low-income). Minot State intends to submit the grant proposal in July.

#### Architectural meetings

Architects for the wellness center, Swain, the community bowl, and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue have been meeting weekly with Minot State staff to discuss their respective projects and plans. These meetings have provided for the coordination of projects and schedules.

#### SBHE and Tuition Cap

At the Dickinson meeting last week, the State Board of Higher Education voted to reduce the 4% cap on tuition recommended by the legislature to 3.5%. The ½ percent reduction resulted in a reduction of \$171,000 for the biennium for Minot State. Subsequent reductions in our budget and changes in plans were made to accommodate this new cap.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

### Geothermal Proposal

M.E.P. Associates, the engineering firm contracted to conduct a feasibility study of the Minot State campus, completed its preliminary study and presented it to President's Staff on May 1. The study is currently being examined before submitting it to M.E.P. and the completion of the final report. The study shows the required upgrades necessary for each of the buildings on campus, the cost differentials from the current system and a geothermal system, and itemized costs for the complete two-year retrograde. The cost for the full geothermal system is approximately \$15 million, including engineering fees. A proposal to request \$7 million in stimulus funds was submitted to the North Dakota Department of Commerce. The legislature also authorized Minot State to transfer the \$2.5 million from the boiler project if the geothermal system is pursued. A performance bonding contract is being investigated to finance the remainder of the cost. The potential for stimulus support will not be known fully until July.

### NCAA Division II

The proposal for MSU to seek membership in the NCAA Division II has been presented to the campus, discussed at open forums, reviewed and unanimously endorsed by the Board of Regents, and recommended by the Beaver Booster Board and the NCAA Task Force. An open forum with the community was held recently to explain the process and answer questions. Minot State intends to submit the application before the deadline of June 1. The review by NCAA and an eventual consideration by a conference will occur within a year. Following the initial year and if approved by the NCAA and by a conference, MSU will be considered in probationary status for the following two years. Minot State is interested in seeking membership in the Northern Sun Conference, which includes 14 universities in this region. The Northern Sun is tentatively considering expansion to 16 universities and forming a north and south division.

### MSU Monument Sign Construction

A groundbreaking for the new monument sign on the corner of Broadway and University was held on May 1. Contractors will be working on the sign for the entire summer, with an anticipated completion in September.

### Sustainability Commitment

On Earth Day and at the request of the MSU Sustainability Committee, I signed the president's climate commitment, which identifies a number of expectations for campus building, materials, and practices that align with sustainable practices. The specifications in this commitment will provide us with guidance to improve our sustainability efforts on campus.

### Compensation Task Force and Salary Deliberations

The Compensation Task Force presented its proposal to guide salary distributions for the coming year. CTF recommended a 3.0% cost of living increase and additional increases to faculty and staff employee classifications farthest away from their respective markets rates. All faculty bases were raised to at least 85% market, staff positions were increased based on years in service, and specific faculty ranks were increased. Of special note were the increases awarded to our clerical staff and faculty. As a result of the increases to faculty ranks, the average salary for each rank except instructors was raised above the average salary for the current year reported by our ten aspiration peers. The average faculty salaries per rank are one performance indicator in our Vision 2013 objectives. Salaries were increased by an average of 5.5%, with the additional ½ percent above the authorized 5% coming from the equity dollars awarded by the legislature.

### Great Plains Performance Indicators

The final performance indicators were distributed to the campus. Two indicators will be studied this following year. Those are: the ACT admission standard and the objective set for an

increased graduation rate. Specific research will be conducted on each performance standard and specific interventions recommended to guide us in reaching and exceeding all of these goals by no later than 2013.

Report to the State Board of Higher Education

At the Dickinson meeting of the SBHE, I updated the Board on plans for the wellness center, the community bowl project and moving of the football field, the geothermal system, opening 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and plans for pursuing NCAA Division II membership.

Meeting with YMCA Board regarding Wellness Center

To answer remaining questions and respond to any further concerns regarding the design and schedule for completing the Health and Wellness Center, I met individually with a number of Board members to discuss the plans and answer questions. This week I went before the full YMCA Board of Directors to report on the purpose of the center, its design, and to respond to questions.

**List of Selected Activities and Events in President’s Office (since April 15, 2009)**

**April**

- Trinity Board meeting
- Helen Oie retirement party
- Campus wide open forums
- Chancellor’s cabinet meeting
- MSU-Bottineau Employee Appreciation Luncheon and welcome
- Conference call with Senator Dorgan’s staff member
- President’s Staff meeting
- Meeting with SGA president
- Wellness Center architect meeting
- Meeting to discuss admission standards
- Staff Senate
- Luncheon with Orlin Backes and Jim Jensen
- MSU Retirement Social and Recognition event
- Participated in Earth Day activities and campus clean up
- Signed president’s sustainability commitment at Earth Day event
- Press conference regarding wrestling and women’s soccer
- Compensation Task Force meeting
- Meeting with Red and Green editor
- Meeting with two community members regarding Wellness Center and impact on YMCA
- Board of Regents Strategic Planning Committee meeting
- Symphony League meeting and dinner
- Meeting with Faculty Senate president
- Science candidate
- Welcome to Honors Student Luncheon
- Conference call with president of AAC&U
- Attended Grand entrance at MSU Pow Wow
- Minot Symphony Orchestra
- Theater performance, Almost, Maine.
- Meeting with Higher Learning Commission visiting team at MSU-Bottineau
- Meeting with architects for all projects
- Foundation Board meeting
- Centers of Excellence meeting

- MSU Spring Band Concert
- Planning and Budgeting Council
- Welcome to NDCPD Conference at Grand International
- Meeting to discuss CTF recommendations
- Higher Learning Commission exit interview at MSU-Bottineau
- Student fees meeting to discuss approval process
- Faculty Senate

**May**

- MSU Board of Regents Spring meeting
- President of Staff Senate
- Architects meeting
- ITC demonstration
- Solar Energy grant meeting
- President’s Staff
- God Child Project event
- Center of Excellence meeting
- Welcome to KMOT Best of Class event on campus
- Welcome and meeting with Northwest Area School Leaders Association
- Meeting with MDU to discuss natural gas usage and geothermal
- Conference call with Northern Sun president regarding NCAA Div II membership
- Education candidate
- Beaver Booster Board meeting to discuss NCAA Div II
- Meeting with chair of University Diversity Council to review year-end report and budget
- Norway visitors planning
- KMSU interview
- Meeting with chair of YMCA Board of Directors
- Business candidate
- Media interviews (MDN, KX, and KMOT)
- Attended Governor’s signing of Grandstand legislations
- CTF salary meeting

- MSU alumni GALA
- Dinner with Title IV visiting consultant
- Conference call with Chancellor and vice chancellor regarding geothermal
- Planning and Budgeting Council
- Meeting with Mayor and City Manager to discuss building projects
- Meeting with NCAA consultants
- Welcome and greeting to MTARS visiting accreditation team
- Title IV planning meeting
- Trinity Board meeting
- CTF and salary reviews
- Visit to Department of Commerce to present preliminary geothermal proposal and discuss stimulus proposal
- Meeting with Governor's Chief of Staff to present geothermal study and to discuss stimulus support
- State Board of Higher Education meeting in Dickinson
- Hosted breakfast reception before Commencement
- MSU Commencement ceremony
- MSU-Bottineau Commencement ceremony
- Meeting with YMCA Board of Directors
- NCAA Div II public open forum in conference center
- Chamber Board of Directors meeting
- Staff Senate meeting
- Community Bowl partnership meeting
- Meeting with the publisher and editor of the Minot Daily News

### Concluding Remarks

The MSU Commencement ceremony witnessed the graduation of more than 700 students, inspiring addresses by Kristi Berg, Faculty Senate President, and Nathan Anderson, Staff Senate President, and Aileen Aldrich, our special student graduation speaker. Chester Reiten and Joy Reiten were honored for their life-long devotion to the Minot community, the Norsk Hostfest, the city of Minot, the state of North Dakota, and their strong support of Minot State University. The ceremony included performances by our fine band and concert choir, and an honor song performed by the Missouri River Drum Group.

It is certainly an honor for all of us to congratulate our students for their achievements, to see them graduate, to welcome and greet their families and friends, and to wish them all well at the end of this academic year. Commencements are fine celebrations to honor our students, our faculty, and our staff for jobs well done. We were pleased to highlight one of the most important strategies of Vision 2013 this year, which is to value all faculty and staff within an inclusive community.

All of our students, faculty, and staff reflect our high values and standards, and continue to demonstrate Minot State University's strong commitment to educational excellence, student support, and student success. We wish all of our graduates only the best in their promising futures.

David Fuller  
May 20, 2009