

**¹Office of the President
Minot State University
Report to Faculty, Staff, Student Leaders,
University Cabinet, Alumni, the Foundation Board, and the MSU Board of Regents
September 19, 2007**

Current Issues and Topics

Enrollment

The third week official enrollment showed nearly a 10% headcount decline, from 3,712 to 3,424. The decline can be partially attributed to MSU's compliance with a State Board of Higher Education policy that requires all students to pay in full or to make arrangements to pay their tuition prior to the census date. A week prior to the census date, the North Dakota University System office announced that it was requiring all institutions to comply with this policy. In previous years MSU made blanket exemptions for those students who had registered and who were attending classes, but who had not paid or made arrangements to pay. It was the university's practice to work with those students after the census date and to assist them in making arrangements to pay their tuition.

This year we could not, based on the directive from the NDUS and in compliance with the policy, make any blanket exemptions for students who had not paid or who had not made arrangements to pay. I am fully supportive of the effort to count only those students who have paid or who have made arrangements to pay, but this last-minute directive caught many of us off guard and resulted, unfortunately, in a precipitous drop in our official enrollment.

Despite those verification processes, our enrollment was projected to decline. Attentive to the trends and the significant demographic challenges facing us, we had anticipated a 5% decline in headcount and budgeted for a 2% decline in full-time equivalent students. Unfortunately, our third-week enrollment information now is difficult to analyze, as we cannot compare these figures to those at the third-week last year. When we analyzed the enrollments on the first day of class, we observed a substantial increase in full-time graduate students, international students and Canadians, and students enrolled at the Minot Air Force Base. At that time we were experiencing a slight decrease in students from Ward County and in first-year students. We will continue to work to sort out the numbers and determine what the final figures will be after students are reinstated following the third week.

Foundations of Excellence for First-Year Students

Minot State University has joined the Foundations of Excellence national program. The university participated in a workshop in Asheville, North Carolina, which was led by John Gardner, a leading scholar and author known for his work on improving education for first-year college students. The university joins a cohort of 14 four-year universities, who will be conducting a self-study of their services for first-year students and developing a plan to enhance those services. Dr. Gary Rabe and Dr. Richard Jenkins will be serving as the co-liaisons and directors for the self-study and working with nine dimensions of excellence committees.

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.

Swain Hall

An architectural firm has been hired to begin working on the design of the building. The Swain Hall Task Force, which is made up of faculty, staff, and administration, has been meeting to discuss possible programs and uses of the building. The renovated Swain Hall will be dedicated as an academic facility.

Gary Holum

All of us at the university express our heartfelt sorrow at the passing of Gary Holum. Gary was, in addition to his service in the legal profession and as a judge, a supporter and friend of the university. He served for two terms on the MSU Board of Regents and on the MSU Foundation Board. He was recently honored with the status as Emeritus member of the Board of Regents. In June, Gary and Joan accompanied many of us on a trip to Norway as a part of the Skien-Minot Delegation. The trip was designed to assist us in securing partnerships with Scandinavian universities. Gary expressed his strong support for these ventures and accompanied us to show support for the signing of these partnerships. Gary's positive and supportive role contributed so well to the success of our visit with our Skien friends and our ability to pursue cooperative programs in Scandinavia. Gary was a first-class individual. He will be missed by all of us at Minot State University.

Master Planning and Landscape Design; and Signage

The master plan has been completed and the work on a landscape design has begun. A few weeks ago the architects from Clark-Enersen Partners visited campus to present the initial drawings of the landscape plan, to meet with the city officials regarding the North Broadway project, to discuss with First Lutheran Church officials ways the cemetery can be incorporated into the master plan, to review the plans for the renovation of the Student Center, and to seek input from campus members regarding the plan to open 11th Avenue. The open meeting with faculty and staff included a presentation on the ways 11th Avenue will be designed to handle the traffic and to provide for safe passage for pedestrians. Those in attendance at the meeting provided the architects with detailed explanations about pedestrian crossings and other safety concerns and issues. The architects compiled a list of those concerns and will focus on them in their design of the avenue.

Hosting SBHE Meeting on Campus

The State Board of Higher Education will be holding its regular meeting on the Minot State University campus, September 19-20, 2007. A presentation by MSU officials will be made to the Board at a breakfast meeting on September 20 and a general discussion with community leaders will be held at noon. The SBHE will hold its meeting from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. on Thursday.

Roundtable and Cornerstone Report for 2006-2007

The reports on the 2006-2007 Cornerstone projects at MSU were compiled, distributed to the full campus, and submitted to the SBHE in early September. A review and approval of the reports will be conducted by the SBHE at its meeting on September 20.

Roundtable and Cornerstone Goals for 2007-2008

The new goals for 2007-2008 are due to the NDUS office by October 4. The new goals will be identified from the Vision 2013 action plans at the next meeting of the University Cabinet. The alignment of the university's strategic plans and the Cornerstone goals will provide an effective means to integrate the Roundtable planning and the university plans. Copies of the new goals will be distributed for review to all faculty and staff.

Convocation Week and Start of School

The academic year started with an all-campus convocation, introductions, and reports from administrators and faculty, student, and staff senate presidents. Concurrent sessions on special topics were held that week as well. The full campus was provided a report from Dr. Ron Royer, the coordinator of MSU's Higher Learning Commission self-study. Another session was held to outline the findings of the study and to seek feedback.

Vision 2013 and Action Plans Distributed at Convocation

The full draft outline of all action plans for Vision 2013 was distributed to faculty and staff at the convocation. A request was made to review the action plans for an open forum that will be held in October. The final draft of the action plans will be prepared and distributed.

Native American Partnership Meetings to Discuss Action Plans

Follow up meetings with Ft. Berthold Community College and Turtle Mountain Community College were held this summer to identify and agree on the priorities both institutions will pursue to cooperate and carry out the intention of the partnerships agreements signed in the spring.

Higher Learning Commission Self-study

The Steering Committee and others on campus have been working diligently throughout the summer to prepare a second-to-last draft of the self-study. Feedback is now being sought and final changes are being made to the document. A final version of the self-study will be prepared and printed by January and distributed to the visiting team members in February. The team visit is scheduled for the last week of March, 2008.

Campus Continuum

President's Staff conducted a telephone conference with a representative from Campus Continuum, a company specializing in the developing of retirement housing on college campuses. The concept involves providing condominium apartments and access to the campus services. Follow up discussions with the SBHE and the campus will be held to determine if this project should be pursued.

Wellness Center Preliminary Plans

The master plan architects had recommended that the university consider adding a wellness center to the east side of the Student Center. President's Staff decided that we should contract with an architect to assist us in considering a plan, identifying a site, and considering the size and function of the building. Before this concept goes any further, campus deliberations will be held.

Emergency Operating Procedures and Plan

A new Emergency Operating Plan Committee has been formed and charged with investigating issues and current plans available on campus, conducting research on other plans and response processes, and then developing a draft of an EOP to review with the campus.

Center of Excellence Proposal

The Great Plains Knowledge and Data Center, a center of excellence proposal developed and submitted to the ND Department of Commerce, has received initial reviews and approval to proceed with a formal presentation to the Center of Excellence Commission. The MSU presentation will be given at 9:15 a.m. in Bismarck on September 21. A thorough review process follows the presentation. If approved, the COE project will receive funding by November 2007.

Board of Regents Current Initiatives

The MSU Board of Regents is considering two proposals. One is to provide funds to assist in the development of a monument sign on the corner of Broadway and University. The second is to fund a special alumni relations coordinator to promote recruitment and fundraising in specified communities. The next Board of Regents meeting is scheduled for October 5 on the MSU campus.

List of Selected Activities and Events (since June 20, 2007)

June

- Attended SBHE meeting in Grand Forks
- Held President's Staff Retreat at Sage Hill
- Chaired ConnectND Oversight and CAC joint meeting in Bismarck
- Hosted luncheon for alumnus

July

- Follow-up meeting on Scandinavian trip
- Hosted dinner for Lynn Borud, an alumnus from Idaho
- Joint meeting with Turtle Mountain Community College officials and MSU to discuss action plans for partnership agreement
- Met to discuss the HLC self-study progress
- Trinity Board meeting
- Participated in Chancellor's two-day Cabinet retreat in Bismarck
- Minot Area Development Corporation Board meeting
- Campus Continuum Conference call to discuss a 55+ housing project
- Meeting to discuss progress on Center of Excellence proposal
- Meeting with Hostfest officials to discuss Scandinavia trip and potential scholarship program
- Chamber of Commerce Board meeting
- Joint meeting with Ft. Berthold Community College officials and MSU to discuss action plans for partnership agreement
- Welcomed ND Writing Project participants at president's luncheon
- Meeting with Board of Regent president
- Monthly meeting with Staff Senate president
- Meeting with officials from Job Corps
- Hosted reception and held Board of Regents summer meeting
- Discussion with art department and athletic department representatives regarding art work on the side of the Dome
- Attended social for parents of first-year students.
- Attended social for Alumni Board at Jim and Verla Rostad's home.
- Walked in State Fair Parade with MSU representatives and MSU float
- Vacation (July 23-August 2)

August

- Attended State Board of Higher Education (SBHE) two-day retreat in Bismarck
- Traveled with MSU team to Asheville, NC, to take part in the Foundations of Excellence for First Year Student meeting
- Hosted luncheon for community leaders on campus
- Attended the Bismarck Alumni Event hosted by Tom and Lisa Feldner at their home in Bismarck
- Higher Learning Commission Self-Study meeting
- Welcomed new faculty at a breakfast meeting during orientation.
- Meeting with Chancellor Goetz on campus.
- Hosted new faculty for a barbecue at our home
- Welcomed students from SIAS University MSU at the Zoo
- Fall convocation meeting
- Visited individual meetings of each college
- Attended the Great Tomato Festival
- MADC meeting.
- Joined other faculty and staff in the annual First-Year Student Move-In Day
- Welcomed to campus the Job Corps Executive Management students
- Participated in a press conference on Foundations of Excellence program.
- Board of Regents Executive Committee meeting
- Attended MSU Development Foundation meeting
- Hosted barbecue/party for the College of Arts and Sciences at our home.
- Two-day visit by master planning architects; including meetings regarding cemetery, North Broadway project, landscape plans, and an open forum to discuss specific issues with campus.
- Hosted breakfast for new staff
- Hosted luncheon meeting with alum
- Hosted barbecue/party for the College of Business at our home.
- Attended and spoke at the dedication ceremony for the new addition of Thatcher Hall at MSU-Bottineau.
- Met with assigned mentees

September

- Hosted dinner with two alums and community leaders
- Attended Chancellor's Cabinet meeting in Bismarck.
- Hosted another breakfast for new staff members.
- Participated in required mentoring program training.
- Dinner meeting with Walter Piehl and Terry Jelsing to discuss design for a sign on University and Broadway.
- Traveled to Boise, Idaho, to participate in events for three days with alumni in Idaho.
- Welcomed the State Employee Recognition Coffee on campus.
- Made presentation to the Souris Valley Danish Society regarding partnership agreement with Aalborg University.
- Trinity meeting
- Hosted dinner for the Staff Senate at our home.
- Participated in two open forums for faculty and staff to discuss Center of Excellence proposal.
- Attended the MSU-Bottineau annual Foundation meeting in Bottineau and spoke to the attendees.
- Hosted new faculty breakfasts.
- Attended the funeral service for Gary Holum, an emeritus Board of Regent member and community leader.
- Chaired the ConnectND Oversight Committee meeting.
- Participated in the presentation on campus to invited community leaders and legislators regarding the MSU Center of Excellence proposal
- MADC Board meeting
- Attended Business after Hours at Souris Valley Golf Course
- Offered welcome to campus to participants at the MSU Mind-Brain Seminar
- Chamber of Commerce Board meeting
- Attended Homecoming Coronation

Concluding Remarks

The summer, which we all depend on to catch up with work and projects, went by quickly. Since the last President's Report in June, our university and many people associated with it have been active and busy. The start of the new academic year, while it comes too quickly for many of us, is an exciting and rewarding time. Greeting our returning students and meeting our new students is especially rewarding. Our connect parent socials, our first-year student move-in day, orientations for students and faculty, the pre-semester meetings, the MSU at the Zoo, and the many opportunities for us to prepare for the start of the new year and at the same time get together socially help us to remain cognizant of the great faculty and staff we are blessed to work with at MSU. Our enrollment will continue to present a challenge to our campus, but there is every indication that our recruitment services office, our international program, and our Center for Extended Learning program is poised to identify new markets and enrollments.

We are looking forward to a good year.

David Fuller
September 19, 2007