

**<sup>1</sup>President's Monthly Report  
Minot State University  
October 15, 2008**

The first two months of the fall semester have been full of activities, events, and general excitement about the start of school and about life on campus. Campus cultural events, student activities, alumni events, athletic events, and activities associated with the Minot community have exemplified the key terms in our Vision 2013—and those are place and engagement. A big thanks needs to go to our student leaders and to the many faculty, staff, and alumni who have pitched in to make the campus full of life and MSU pride. The Higher Learning Commission self study and team report concluded that we are doing exceptionally well, the self study completed for the Foundations of Excellence for First Year Students identified exciting new directions in support of our first-year students, and the many achievements recorded by the institution and by departments in our Vision 2013 work have demonstrated very well that our campus continues to prosper and work toward our vision for 2013. With the engagement, the increase in our fall enrollment and the many successes by our people on campus, there is a general sense of optimism about our future. As one of the few states in the United States that is enjoying a significant budget surplus, North Dakota is positioned well to support higher education in the upcoming legislative session. The reinvigorated North Dakota Roundtable initiative will offer a well renewed and strong collaboration between higher education, the private sector, and the legislative and executive branches of state government. The prospect for Minot State University in this coming year is encouraging.

**Current Topics, Issues, and Proposals**

Official Enrollments for Fall Semester

The official numbers show an increase from this time last year. Ward County numbers and, Canadian enrollments have shown a significant increase. We have also noted increases in international enrollments, Native American enrollments, and the numbers at off-campus sites, and in on-line numbers. Our retention of first-year students increased by 7 percent. Many of the retention initiatives we have been pursuing are starting to pay off. Slight declines were seen in the outlying counties in North Dakota, which has been predicted in view of the projections that the number of North Dakota high school graduates will drop by 30% by 2017. The strategies and priorities for enrollment are showing positive signs, but there is still considerable work that all of us need to do to maintain our enrollments.

Budgets and Official Fall Enrollments

This past spring our campus engaged in a budget streamlining in view of the enrollments in state-supported programs. Our on-line enrollments and budgets have been balancing the declines in the appropriated budget for the past few years. The streamlining helped us reduce our appropriated budget by \$1.3 million dollars, which was still short of eliminating the deficit on the appropriated side of the budget. At that time we were anticipating an enrollment decline and actually budgeted for a 1.5% reduction in the number of full-time equivalent students. With the

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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.

good news of our headcount increase, it is not necessary to reduce our budget further at this time. In view of the slight increase in the FTE, we are preparing a plan to return some of the operating dollars that were reduced in the spring. A plan to return dollars to the departmental budgets will be outlined at the Cabinet meeting and discussed further at the open forums in early November.

#### Results of the study of Great Plains premier universities and aspiration peers

Our institutional researchers are nearing completion of a study of the Great Plains regional universities. Eight schools have been identified as the most successful in a number of performance standards. The high performance standards for these universities are generally related to the graduation rates and retention rates of these institutions. The standards that we plan to use will set higher benchmarks for us to achieve by 2013. Achieving those benchmarks will provide us with the justification to be considered, as our goal specifies, one of the premier regional universities of the “great” Great Plains. These benchmarks will be announced at the open forums in November and shared with the University Cabinet and the three Senates.

#### Study of graduation and retention rates

The MSU graduation and retention rates are being studied carefully to determine the causes for lower-than-average rates. The 2000 cohort, which recorded a graduation rate of 34%, is being examined for GPAs overall and in each of our major programs, ACT scores, and other factors. These data are being presented to the Deans Council and further study of the rates in each of the major programs will follow. Retention rates are also being studied closely to determine what students we retain and why, and which ones we lose and why. The Foundation of Excellence strategies, such as a new first-year seminar, will target specifically the causes of first-year attrition.

#### Vision 2013 projects

A number of major projects and initiatives, which will be supported by one-time dollars, will be proposed to the Planning and Budgeting Council and discussed with the campus at the open forums in November.

#### New recruitment and search processes and guidelines

Our Human Resource director has been working on preliminary guidelines for recruitment and search processes. When completed, these new guidelines will be shared and discussed with each of the Senates. The purpose of these new guidelines is to make more consistent the processes for conducting searches aligned with our mission and vision. Each search will require that new faculty and staff will possess qualifications directly related to our institutional values, exceptional student support, excellence in teaching and learning, and commitments to Minot State University as an institution of place and engagement.

#### Premature release of a minimum class enrollment draft proposal

Dr. Rabe and the deans had been working on a minimum class enrollment procedure to deal with low-enrolled classes, student notification in case of course cancellation, and general scheduling. The work on such a procedure was necessary for us to make sure that we are using our resources effectively, that we are not offering classes with exceptionally low numbers, that we are able to respond to high demand courses and programs, while not providing to students in smaller programs a schedule of courses appropriate to graduate within four years. Most institutions have such procedures and guidelines for course enrollments. Unfortunately, before the proposal was completed and refined and presented to students and faculty and their respective senates, someone from campus provided a confidential copy of the draft to Andrea Johnson at the Minot Daily News. Despite our strong objections to not publish the story and not to include the number 14 until the draft had complete vetting and hearing on campus, the MDN chose to run the story and

to include the initial minimum number of 14. While the MDN explained in its story that it was a draft, subsequent releases of the story in other media emphasized the new policy and the enrollment number. It was unfortunate that the story was released before the draft procedure was discussed with our campus and our Senates. Most certainly, the nature of the procedure and the class minimum would have undergone debate and revision. This whole situation has caused some concerns by students and faculty who were not aware of the rationale or purpose. Dr. Rabe has responded by going to any department and speaking with individuals who have had concerns. I have also responded to a variety of letters from students who fear that their programs will be dropped and are in jeopardy. In my responses, I have assured them that there are no reasons for them to fear that their programs will not be offered or that they will not be able to enroll in courses for their programs. I also explained that I am in full agreement with this initiative to develop a workable procedure for dealing with low-enrolled courses.

#### Higher Learning Commission report outline of recommendations and directions

We have prepared a specific outline of the recommendations and directions provided in the team report of our Higher Learning Commission accreditation review. This outline includes specific recommendations made by the team and endorsed by the Commission. This outline will be shared with the University Cabinet and in turn shared with faculty and staff in their respective areas. The outline will also be shared with each of the three Senates along with plans to respond to each recommendation and suggestion. Of particular note will be our requirement to prepare a Progress Report on Enrollment Management, which is due to the Commission in 2011. Work on that report and other specific suggestions will be undertaken this year.

#### Visit by Tora Aasland, the Minister of Higher Education and Research from Norway

Minot State University was honored to host a dignitary who was visiting Minot as a part of the Norsk Hostfest. Minister Aasland, Dr. Berit Johne, the science counselor with the Royal Embassy of Norway in Washington D.C., Ole-Jacob Skodvin, the Higher Education Director for Norway, and Heidi Dybesland, and a senior advisor visited Minot State University, participated in a meeting with MSU officials, the vice chancellor of the NDUS, and a board member from the SBHE. The participants in this breakfast meeting discussed college preparation, collaborations, international partnerships, Norwegian educational systems, and the systems in North Dakota. The Minister and her entourage toured the MSU campus, spoke to the president of our Student Government Association, met with Native American students, visited the Beaver Dam and Career Services Offices, and received reports on INBRE from our scientists on their research, the CASCLS project in Education from our education chair, and presentations by our dean of CEL regarding on-line and distance education deliveries via IVN.

#### Clint Severson as Norsk Hostfest Hall of Fame Recipient and MSU Graduate

Mr. Severson, a 1973 graduate of Minot State, was honored as one of the four inductees to this year's Scandinavian-American Hall of Fame. Mr. Severson, a successful businessman and native of Minot, was selected as the 2007 Forbes Entrepreneur of the Year. In his acceptance remarks, Mr. Severson acknowledged that his education at Minot State was largely responsible for his achievements.

#### Measures 1 and 2

If these measures go into effect, the negative impact on higher education will be significant. A detailed report from the State Board of Higher Education, which has correctly come out in opposition to these measures, will be released soon. This report and detailed analyses of its deleterious effects on North Dakota higher education and Minot State University will be outlined.

It is very important that everyone reads these reports and understands fully the impact these measures will have on our budgets and on higher education in general.

#### Roundtable Meeting

The progressive Roundtable initiative is becoming reinvigorated as a means for higher education, the legislature, and the private sector to work together for the economic welfare of North Dakota. A new Roundtable committee has been formed and met recently in Bismarck to outline its directions and approaches.

#### Open Forums in November

Two open forums will be held in early November to invite discussion about important topics and initiatives for MSU. Like all open forums, everyone is invited and all comments welcomed.

#### Major Gifts officer

A new major gifts officer, Mr. Mark Schnabel, has been hired to work specifically on seeking large financial contributions in support of students, our university, and the capital campaign focused on our centennial year of 2013.

#### Possible Partnership with Harstad University in Norway

We have had some initial discussions with the former president of Harstad University, about a partnership with another Norwegian university. Brent Askvig, the director of NDCPD, who has visited Harstad, is discussing possible curriculum articulations between MSU and Harstad.

#### Winged Victory Sculpture

An unfortunate miscommunication led to the serious damage to this sculpture, which was given to MSU by the Class of 1923. Our art department has examined the remaining sections of the sculpture and is considering the possibility of rebuilding the sculpture. Another possibility is to purchase another sculpture of Winged Victory, perhaps bronze, to replace the damaged sculpture. Reports and recommendations are due to the president shortly.

#### Recycling project and XCEL grant

The recycling project unveiled at the August convocation has not been completed. As a full-campus project involving many constituents, our recycling program will need input from many on campus. I have recommended that the three Senates appoint representatives to serve on the committee and that objectives and committee processes are established to meet the goals of the Xcel grant and to respond to various recycling needs on campus.

#### Grow North Dakota Tuition Proposal

A proposal that MSU charge one tuition rate for in-state and out-of-state students has been developed and circulated to the three senates. The concept was discussed by and later endorsed by the MSU Board of Regents. A discussion about the proposal has been held with the Minot SBHE board member and a group of local legislators. The formal proposal has been sent to the Vice Chancellor for Finance at the NDUS for her review with the Chancellor. After a full review by the campus Senates, the proposal will be reviewed by the NDUS academic and student services committees and the Chancellor's Cabinet before being sent to the State Board of Higher Education in November.

#### Analyses of mentoring, advising, and residence halls plans

Two detailed reports were prepared by our Career Services Director, our Mentoring Director, and our Director of Residence Life. Each was asked to examine the impact of their respective programs. The mentorship program, for instance, was shown to have had a positive impact on

first-year retention. Since the requirement that first-year students live in the residence halls, the data show that students living in the residence halls perform better in their studies than students who do not. Both hypotheses were advanced to support the implementation of those respective programs. With these reports, we plan to pursue their recommendations for improvements in mentoring, advising, and residence hall programming.

### Board of Regents initiatives

The MSU Board of Regents and their respective committees have made recommendations about specific initiatives to improve recruiting and ways to advance our positions with the State Board. Each of these initiatives will be presented to the University Cabinet for its information and feedback.

## **List of Selected Activities and Events in President's Office (since August 25, 2008)**

### **August**

- MSU Foundation Board Meeting
- Red-out Evening Football Game

### **September**

- Chancellor's Cabinet meeting in Bismarck
- Board of Regents Executive Committee Meeting
- Welcome and Ribbon cutting at MSU Office at the Magic City Campus
- Interview on the Noon Show on KXMC
- Meeting to discuss CASCLS
- Meeting with two local legislators
- Meeting to discuss service learning coordination
- Western Plains Opera performance
- Meeting with Eagle Operations in Kenmare to discuss COB energy proposal
- Student Government Association meeting
- Welcome and presentation to Legislative Council's Interim Higher Education Committee two-day meeting on the MSU campus
- Meeting to discuss CEO Cancer Gold Standard Accreditation
- Interview by American Executive Magazine editors
- Attended reception and dinner honoring Clara Sue Price
- Orientation for new Board of Regents members
- Meeting on campus with Chancellor Goetz
- Welcomed participants attending the 9/11 ceremony on campus
- Taught a writing class at MSU-Bottineau and addressed the topic of Thoreau and Writing
- Keynote speaker on Henry David Thoreau at the MSU-Bottineau Campus Reads Event on the Bottineau campus
- Meeting with Odney Advertising to discuss proposed campaign for Vision 2013
- Meeting with editor and publisher at the Minot Daily News office
- Chamber Board of Directors meeting. Meeting with mayor, MPS officials and MSU to discuss Community Bowl
- Attended CEL open forum
- Board of Regents Strategic Planning Committee meeting
- Meeting to discuss the addition of wrestling
- Attended State Board of Higher Education meeting in Valley City
- Interviewed candidate for the Major Gifts position on campus
- Hosted luncheon for group of new staff members
- Attended Dale Brown's YP presentation to the community in the Dome
- Welcomed participants at the MSU Bonfire event
- Visited Writing Center's open house
- Meeting to discuss fourth week official enrollment figures
- Attended Homecoming Coronation event
- Welcomed participants at the President's Club members' luncheon
- One-on-one meeting with president of the Student Government Association
- Welcomed honorees and participants at the Alumni Golden Awards Dinner
- Attended and presented at the fall meeting of the Board of Regents
- Interviewed by Red and Green writer regarding the Winged Victory sculpture
- Meeting with SBHE member to discuss tuition proposal
- Attended alumni reunion celebrations for Track and Field, Cross Country, and the 1969 Rose Bowl Band
- Homecoming parade and football game
- Presented plaques to Hall of Fame award winners at half-time of Homecoming game

- Attended MSU's athletic Hall of Fame Banquet
  - Attended performance of Brass Band of Minot honoring Chester Reiten .
  - Hosted Tora Aasland, the Minister of Higher Education and Research, and her guests during the Hostfest
  - Accompanied the Minister to a welcome dinner at Hostfest.
  - Hosted breakfast meeting in honor of the Minister; led the meeting with the minister, MSU administrators, the vice chancellor for NDUS, and SBHE Board meeting to discuss higher education issues and collaboration.
  - Led the minister and her associates on a tour of the MSU campus where she was greeted by a number of faculty and staff to explain their areas of research and work.
  - Participated in a press conference with the Minister at the International Inn.
  - Accompanied the Minister to the Joint Service Club luncheon and a tour of the Scandinavian Heritage Park.
  - Accompanied the Minister and her associates to the Arctic Reception and the Governor's Reception to open the Norsk Hostfest.
- October**
- Accompanied the Minister to Hostfest and to a special luncheon at En Tu Tre; later escorted her to a reception at the Hostfest Hall of Fame Banquet
  - Gave the official introduction of Clint Severson at the Scandinavian-American Hall of Fame Banquet; Mr. Severson was one of the four people inducted into the Hall of Fame and an MSU alumnus.
  - Met with Warren Larson from Senator Dorgan's office
- Gave tour of campus to Skien's City Manger and the Vice Mayor; Skien is Minot's sister city.
  - Made formal 30-minutes presentation to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Governor's Office in Bismarck.
  - Volunteered at Hostfest to greet people at the Main Entrance.
  - Participated in luncheon held for local legislators on appropriation committees to discuss MSU projects.
  - Met with the manger of Sykes to discuss future collaboration.
  - Meeting with Jan Meyer, a professor from Harstad University in Norway to discuss potential collaboration.
  - Hosted all members of the Student Government Association at our house for their meeting and a picnic.
  - Red and Green interview regarding HLC accreditation.
  - One-on-one monthly meeting with the editor of Red and Green.
  - Held regular one-on-one meetings with the Presidents of Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and Student Government Association.
  - Invited by the Interim Higher Education Committee chair to serve as a member of the Roundtable; attended the first full-day meeting of the Roundtable in Bismarck.
  - Took a vacation to attend our son's wedding in California.
  - Meeting with the architect for the proposed Wellness Center.
  - Attended Dean's Council meeting to discuss cohort analysis and graduation rates.

David Fuller  
October 15, 2008