

**Office of the President
Minot State University
Report to University Cabinet and Campus
November 16, 2005**

This report includes selected University activities. It is distributed to the University Cabinet at its regular monthly meeting, and it is also forwarded to faculty, staff, and student leaders for their information. If anyone wishes to learn more about any of these items, he/she should contact the president.

Report of Current Activities (since October 19, 2005)

- Representatives from the Turtle Mountain Community College (TMCC) and the Acting President, Carol Davis visited campus on October 19 for a meeting with MSU. On November 14, the president of Ft. Berthold Community College and a faculty member visited MSU for a joint meeting. Both institutions discussed collaborative projects and potential shared programs. A team of MSU faculty and staff have arranged to travel to both institutions to discuss an articulation agreement involving criminal justice, social work, and other programs.
- The North Dakota Employees Association and the 41st Annual Delegate Assembly invited me to address the assembly and respond to questions. The NDEA requested that I provide information regarding current projects at MSU and in higher education in the state. I responded to a number of questions. One of the questions regarded the across-the-board salary increase policies of MSU and the state. One delegate explained that some institutions gave across-the-board pay raises. I explained that I had been told that the board did not allow across-the-board amounts, but that I would check into this guideline and practice. I also explained that I personally favored a criterion that recognizes a portion of increases for cost-of-living increases.
- The Open Forums at 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. on October 24 included a PowerPoint presentation on the preliminary strategic goals established by the Planning and Budgeting Council, a handout of the summaries from the Council teams who analyzed the focus-group results, and a question-and-answer session. Both sessions were well attended and included a lively discussion about the plans for the future.
- My wife and I hosted a reception/dinner for all members of the Staff Senate and their spouses and significant others on the evening of October 24. We also hosted a reception/dinner for the Faculty Senate and their significant others on November 3 at our home. Both gatherings offered us a nice opportunity to get to know members of our faculty and staff senates.
- On October 25 representatives from the North Dakota Higher Education Consortium on Alcohol Abuse met with members of the President's Staff and other campus staff members. We discussed current activities on our campus and related issues. A report will be provided to the NDUS Chancellor's Cabinet and to the State Board of Higher Education. The Consortium representatives commended our campus representatives, in particular Celeste Barfield, for our attention to this serious and growing problem.
- The Open House in the Student Union Atrium on October 27 was well attended by faculty, staff, students, and community members. All of the strategic planning focus-group results and comments were displayed in the atrium, and participants were invited to offer their comments to any or all of the seven questions. As a result, we received many additional and insightful comments about the university and our plans for the future.

- On the afternoon of Halloween, members of the administrative staff and the superintendent of the Minot Public School System met with faculty, staff, and members of the President's Staff for a joint meeting. Topics discussed included: dual credit, joint powers agreements, future collaborations between faculty, staff, and teachers at our respective institutions, and academic programs at MSU.
- The Chancellor's Cabinet (including all presidents and NDUS vice chancellors and chancellor) met on November 2. There were many items on the agenda. The one that consumed the most time was a discussion of the Chancellor's proposal for a system-wide international recruitment and ESL program. The proposal was approved. Further details of this program can be provided if anyone is interested. In short, the program is going to include a centralized location for an ESL (English as a Second Language) Institute, which will train international students in the use of English and encourage those students to subsequently enroll in one of the 11 state institutions. The program calls for hiring a vice chancellor of international recruitment, recruiters, and staff to provide the support for the ESL institute. The Bismarck State College stage 1 proposal to add a four-year degree program was not acted upon but deferred until a subsequent Cabinet meeting.
- In my role in the Higher Learning Commission Corps of Team Chairs, I visited an institution in Minnesota on November 6-8 for a focused-visit/evaluation. I visit approximately two schools per year in my role as a consultant evaluator for the Higher Learning Commission.
- On November 9-10, Rick Hedberg and I traveled to Dickinson State University to take part in the Dakota Athletic Conference (DAC) meeting with presidents and athletic directors. The primary focus of that meeting was on the future of the conference, possible alliances with other conferences, the benefits of NAIA affiliation, and other related issues. There is controversy regarding the interests of Dakota State University in Madison, SD, and Minot State University to consider possible affiliations with NCAA Div II. Some schools in our conference are not interested in Div II; others are interested in possible affiliations with other NAIA conferences, such as the Frontier Conference in Montana and the GPAC in Sioux Falls.

Other:

- Minot State University Accreditation and Self Study. The University is continuing to make preparations for the Higher Learning Commission self study and team visit. Preliminary preparations occurred last year when the institution sent teams of faculty and staff to a training on the new HLC criteria in Minneapolis and to the HLC annual meeting in Chicago. The teams met following those trips in the spring to discuss the new accreditation criteria and the approaches we should take in conducting our own self study. The last comprehensive evaluation of MSU occurred in October 1997, at which time the university received notice that the next evaluation would occur in ten years. The next visit could occur in either October 2007 or March/April 2008. HLC guidelines suggest that a campus begin preparation for the study at least two years in advance of the date scheduled for the visit. President's Staff met recently to discuss the self-study process and to consider individuals who could assume the role as the self-study coordinator. A coordinator will be appointed by the end of the fall semester. Following that appointment, the campus will begin work to establish a steering committee, schedule, and process for proceeding with the self study. For those of you who have not been a part of an accreditation ten-year review, you should know that such an effort requires the full campus (faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members) to conduct a thorough study. To do them well, self studies require considerable time and effort on the part of all campus members.

- Centers of Excellence and Artspace. MSU plans to resubmit the application for the second round of the Centers of Excellence proposals. The initial proposals for the second round are due on December 9, and the final proposals due on January 6. The feedback we've received about our first application indicates that our proposal should include more specific and concrete information regarding the economic impact of the project (e.g., numbers of artists, revenue generated, subsidiary partners, numbers of employees, etc.) On November 11-12, Jerry Stai, Orlin Backes, the former mayor of Minot, and I flew to Minneapolis and toured Artspace facilities and met with the Artspace staff to discuss the project and the application details. We are intending to apply for \$4 million in dollars from the state for this project. The land housing the old A.J. Automotive facility is under serious consideration by Artspace. MSU's foundation submitted a bid to purchase the land. Currently, the bid has been accepted pending an environmental analysis of the property. Again, the prospect of a collaboration with Artspace and the opportunity for our art programs to move under one roof in a new facility are well worth our persistence in pursuing this project.
- Strategic Planning and the Planning and Budgeting Council. The Planning and Budgeting Council has summarized all responses received during the Open Forums on October 24 and the comments received during the Open House on October 27. At a meeting on Monday, the Council discussed at length the University's essential purpose, and that is the education provided to students. The discussion centered on the essential qualities we believe a graduate should possess when he/she graduates from Minot State University. The Council's belief was that unless we can describe the future graduate and his/her qualities—those that will allow him/her to succeed, to lead a meaningful and rewarding life, and to be able to contribute in a substantial way to others—we would not be able with any clear sense be able to identify responsible and powerful goals for the institution. It was agreed that a web survey will be administered to faculty, staff, and students asking for their opinion as to the three most important qualities of a future graduate.
- Graphic Standards Manual. Following a discussion with the University Cabinet regarding key recommendations from Woychick Designs, the consulting firm hired to establish a campus brand, web appearance, and communications guidelines, President's Staff reviewed, revised, and approved the guidelines for the manual. The guidelines include a visual review procedure, the web page standards recommended by the Web Review Committee, acceptable logos, elimination of all secondary or duplicate logos except specific uses for RCJC and NDCPD, colors, and the use of the tag line Be Seen, Be Heard. These guidelines will be incorporated into the new standards manual.
- Extending Office Hours. Responses from Planning and Budgeting focus-groups and suggestions received during the October 27 atrium event indicate a strong interest in providing students more accessible campus services. Extended hours, particularly over the lunch hour, are being considered carefully by administrative offices. The Student Association three years ago brought forward a recommendation for extended hours, and recently the current Student Association has issued similar resolutions about extended hours in the library and expanded hours in administrative services.
- Position Descriptions for Members of the President's Staff. New position descriptions are being developed for all members of the president's staff. With the new positions and the changes in responsibilities, the new descriptions will provide a more accurate definition of responsibilities and expectations tied directly to our mission and value of students first. These descriptions will be shared with all members of the University Cabinet when the process is completed.

- Public Information Survey. The results of this survey were compiled. The results showed that 68% of the responses indicated that internal communications on campus were favorable. Over 80% of the comments indicated that too many emails are sent that contain old or inaccurate information. Regarding external communications, 43% of the respondents were favorable, while 30% were critical of the external communications. The majority of respondents reacted negatively to a weekly newsletter and did not want announcements placed in public folders. More respondents indicated a preference for MSU Inside to be published on a two-week basis than those who wanted it to stay on a monthly basis. Almost all respondents believe that we should increase our focus on sending announcements to regional newspapers. These comments and others are being followed closely to reconfigure our public information office and to identify primary responsibilities for the PIO director. Thanks to all who responded with your comments and suggestions.
- Follow up on Potential Collaboration with Sias International University. Following Dr. Chen's (the president of Sias International) visit to campus on October 10, we have been discussing the establishment of a cooperative arrangement between MSU and Sias. Responding to a personal invitation from Dr. Chen, I am considering a trip to visit Sias International, along with Dr. Lee and Stephanie Witwer. The President of the Minot Chamber of Commerce and the mayor of Minot are considering the trip. A mid-February trip is being considered.
- Retention Rate. Lisa Johnson and Gary Rabe informed us recently that our freshman-to-sophomore retention rate went from 62.7% last year to 70%. That rate was based on a federal definition of retention, which is: the percentage of first-time, full-time freshmen who were enrolled fall 2004 and returned to the institution for any number of credits in the fall of 2005. The number of full-time first-year students in the fall of 2004 was 393. Seventy percent (274/393) returned for any number of credits; 30% did not return (119/393). The calculation used to determine the retention rate was the same used last year.

Final Comments

We met with Grant Crawford, the CIO for the North Dakota University System, on Monday of this week. He assured all of us that things are improving with the implementation of the PeopleSoft system. We reminded him that there are many on campus who are working exceptionally hard and beyond the call of duty to deal with the PeopleSoft issues and challenges. While not involved directly in this system, I am mindful of the challenges this is presenting to our staff, and I am more than ever grateful of the work people are doing to manage this system. I am also mindful of the hard work of all of our faculty and staff as we near the end of the semester. This is a busy time. Thanks to all of you and your staff for the extraordinary jobs all of you do for our students and the University.

David Fuller
 President
 November 16, 2005