

April 13, 2011

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

FROM: David Fuller

SUBJECT: ¹Monthly President's Report

Current

Legislative Session

As the legislative session is winding down, I can say that this one has been a roller-coaster ride. Most of the budget requests submitted by State Board of Higher Education and recommended by the Governor were not supported by the House Appropriations Committee. In fact, most if not all essential budget lines were removed by the House committee for some reason. The Senate Appropriations Committee has recently recommended a restoration of those requests, but at this point it is hard to know how it will turn out in a few weeks. The majority leader introduced a resolution (HCR 3046) to completely overhaul the SBHE and K-12 by doing away with the current system and replacing it with a superintendent and an advisory committee who would oversee all public school education and all of higher education. Most surprisingly, the House voted to approve that plan, including many of our own local legislators. But the Senate recently rejected it on a vote of 40 to 7. There's a lot of discussion and action about the UND logo, but the greater concern for me is the proposed legislation and rhetoric that is highly critical of higher education and the job we are doing. In my testimony last week in opposition to HCR 3046, I reiterated my belief and understanding that higher education and Minot State University are doing well, and I invited members of the committee and other legislators to visit Minot State and Minot to see for themselves.

The disconnect between the view of the few critics of higher education and the proven successes and accomplishments of higher education remains difficult to understand. The fact remains that Minot State University educates its students with about 75% of the average funds it takes to educate a student at our peer institutions. Those who maintain that we receive too much state support do not understand how efficient our university is, or that state support only accounts for about 1/3 of our total expenses. The other argument maintains that higher education is not accountable, that we do not provide information to show how well we are doing. In regard to that one, too, those individuals have not looked at the published accountability reports that have been produced annually since 2000 and distributed in their entirety to our legislators. Those reports provide in full detail evaluations and assessment of our universities to show how well we are doing. The fact remain that Minot State University's enrollments are climbing, our persistence rates are increasing, our academic programs are providing top-notch education, our campus is engaged and alive, and we're taking notable steps to raise the bar on all of our areas. Not only that, but our university provides for a \$135 million impact on our local economy. Those who want to dismantle higher education because it is perceived to be too expensive or

¹ The President's Report is a monthly summary of activities in the president's office and current issues affecting the campus. Since no University Cabinet meeting was held in December, this report covers two months instead of one. The report 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.

because it isn't doing its job just do not have a good understanding of higher education and the impact it is having on our students and our state.

Energy Symposium

Minot State University hosted the second symposium on our campus recently. This one focused on the impact of the petroleum industry on North Dakota, and it brought in many experts on a variety of topics, from roads, water, crime, workforce, and other subjects. This symposium is a collaboration between Dickinson State University and Minot State University. The funding comes from support from former Senator Byron Dorgan, and it also supports a workforce development initiative involving Williston State College and Bismarck State College. Thanks to Kris Warmoth, her staff, and JoAnn Linrud and the coordinating committee for making this a very successful event for the many attendees.

Vice President for Academic Affairs

We are very pleased that Dr. Lenore Koczon will be joining us as the new vice president for academic affairs. This week she is visiting Minot to look for a home, and at that time she has agreed to join us for our University Cabinet meeting and to meet with Dr. Moen and the deans in our academic affairs council. She will start officially on June 1 and work directly with Dr. Moen for a few weeks as she transitions into her position. At that time, please join me and others to extend a hearty welcome to our campus and to our community.

Public Information Director

We are also very pleased to welcome our new public information director, Susan Ness. She brings with her in-depth experience as a writer for a newspaper and in other public relations positions. We have recently accompanied her on visits and discussions with KXMC, KMOT, and the Minot Daily News. Our purpose is to make sure we continue our effective practices getting the word about Minot State University in the local media and providing timely and professional information to those on our campus and those off campus.

Herb Parker seating and press box

Recently our seating and press boxes in our stadium were demolished and removed. The concrete foundation to the seats was literally sliding down the hill and presenting a serious hazard to our fans and visitors. We are currently preparing documents to seek a bid to replace the seating. The seating should be installed before August. Temporary units will be provided for the press until which time we can move ahead on replacing the press boxes and other facilities.

Construction begins on Wellness Center

At the beginning of March the contractors began the excavation work for the new center. A large portion of the removal of the dirt has been completed, and new concrete forms are being installed. The plan is to complete the entire facility in approximately a year from now.

Weather

The weather this winter has been especially difficult for us on campus. We've had to close campus on a few occasions because of the severity of the storms. Roger Kluck and his staff have worked hard and promptly to clear snow in our parking lots and walkways. This has required very early morning and weekend work to keep ahead of the snow. Thanks to Roger and his staff for a job well done this difficult season.

Senate Appropriation Presentation

Brian Foisy and I made budget presentations to the senate appropriation committee and highlighted campus efforts to address persistence and graduation rates, pursue strategic directions

for the campus, provide for prudent oversight to our budget and financing, and oversee our deferred maintenance needs and budgets. We also provided detailed information about our geothermal project and the needs we have to complete this project. I also participated in the senate appropriation hearing for Dakota College at Bottineau, with Dean Grosz and Jim Borkowski.

Great Plains Community Research and Service Center

Neil Sharpe and Paul Markel are making notable progress on this center. They have identified a number of community projects and are working to initiate activities with local communities. They have also begun making plans for meetings with small communities in the region. Those meetings are intended to discuss with community leaders and citizens opportunities for Minot State University to work with local agencies and leaders to address community issues and problems. The first meeting is scheduled with the community of Bottineau in conjunction with Dakota College at Bottineau.

NCAA Division II Evaluation Visit

This week we have representatives from the NCAA visiting our campus for a two-day evaluation of the progress we have made in accomplishing the objectives set for us for membership in the NCAA. The evaluators will be meeting with administrators, athletic staff, faculty, students, and community leaders to determine if Minot State should be offered full membership in the NCAA.

Sias International University representative visit to campus

A staff member from Sias International University visited our campus recently to discuss our relationship and the potential for further collaboration through a 2 + 2 partnership. The Sias representative visited with our deans, vice presidents, faculty from various departments, and our international program. She will return to China and work with President Chen to discuss further steps to strengthen our relationship and our exchanges.

Comprehensive Advising Plan

At the beginning of the academic year I asked that our campus take aggressive steps to address one of the most important strategies for improving student success and persistence, and that is developing a comprehensive advising system. I met with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee in the fall and the advising committee and our new advising coordinator to discuss common values and objectives for an advising system on campus. Based on that feedback and best practices nationally for effective advising systems, I prepared a draft of a letter summarizing a plan, shared it with Faculty Senate, and Dr. Moen met with the deans and chairs to review current advising practices on the departmental level and to determine how they could incorporate these new features into their advising approaches. The letter was distributed last month describing key features of this comprehensive plan. Dr. Moen has been working with the deans and department chairs to develop common approaches to ensure that students receive regular advising throughout the year, personal contacts with assigned advisors, defined and posted office hours, and requirements for students to meet with their advisors. Research shows that the number one means of impacting student persistence is through an effective advising system. At present we do not have a common requirement for students to meet with advisors. The features of this advising system should be put in place this year and ready for implementation at the beginning of next academic year.

General Education reviews and processes

The Faculty Senate's general education committee members have proceeded deliberately to provide faculty and staff many opportunities to consider various options and to provide input about potential revisions to general education. The process has been inclusive and deliberate to

make sure that everyone can offer their views and participate in the development of a model that will eventually be advanced for approval. The LEAP essential learning outcomes and other models have been used to inform the development of these plans.

EID Passport Discussions for a Center of Excellence

A Washington-state-based company has made a commitment to locate one of its centers in Minot. This company specializes in technology and computer-based information systems. The Minot Area Development Corporation (MADC), EID Passport, and Minot State University have been engaged in discussions about partnering on an enhanced computer science and software engineering program. This company and other technology companies are eager to work with Minot State University and to support the expansion of our program through which students may complete specialized computer science training and then engage in internships and cooperatives on site to finish their degrees. The companies and MADC are interested in Minot State University developing a specialized curriculum and hiring at least one Ph.D. software engineer and eventually another. Depending on the criteria specified for a new Centers of Excellence grant, Minot State University intends to pursue such proposal in concert with MADC and this technology firm.

Geothermal project update

Following our Senate Appropriations presentation and our request for continued consideration for support for the geothermal system, we have learned that a proposal was submitted to revisit the geothermal funding request made to the SBHE and the Office of Budget and Management. While it is too early to know, there is some hope, albeit small, that we may receive support for this project. As one will recall, when the full geothermal system is completed, the estimate is that this system will save our university \$500,000 per year in utility costs. I should mention, too, that XCEL Energy has generously provided MSU a \$10,000 grant to support the investigation of an alternative energy/geothermal curriculum. Dr. John Webster has been working with colleagues and studying other programs to determine what such a curriculum should include. He is planning on attending national workshops on this topic.

Studies in the Community and Environment Director

We are pleased to announce that Dr. John Lemons, a biologist and environmental scientist and former director of an interdisciplinary environmental program at New England College, will begin work on August 1 to establish our approved Studies in the Community and Environment. The SCE program and major was developed over the last three years by a committee of faculty and staff. This SCE program will initiate an exciting new interdisciplinary program focused on introducing students to environmental and community issues and to engaging them in field-based, problem-solving activities. Dr. Lemons brings with him extensive experience with interdisciplinary programs and field-based research. We are looking forward to his arrival at Minot State University.

Noel Levitz Enrollment Management Consultation

Our Noel Levitz consultant will be visiting campus in the near future to begin work on planning for an enrollment management plan for the campus. This plan will be dependent on sophisticated institutional research and data collection to guide our planning for enrollment targets and strategies for recruitment and retention.

MSU at the Mall

Last Saturday our campus held its annual MSU at the Mall event. Coordinated by Teresa Loftesnes, this event involved booths and tables displaying many of our programs and highlighting our faculty, staff, and students. Nearly the entire wing from Scheels to Sears was

full of our tables and displays. First hand demonstrations by students and faculty provided visitors to the mall a wonderful introduction to our remarkable programs and students. There is not a better way to highlight the great things we are doing than having our students, faculty, and staff greeting visitors and showing them what our individual departments are doing on behalf of students. Thanks to all of you who participated in this very successful event.

Veterans Director and Office

We are in the process of interviewing candidates for our Veterans’ Office director position. The new director and office will provide our current veterans personal support and will also reach out to other veterans who are potential students at MSU. The director will work with our veterans students organization to raise the visibility and the level of strong support we provide to veterans and their families.

Employee Appreciation Luncheon

This past Thursday our campus celebrated another appreciation luncheon to honor our colleagues who have served our university well for many years, from five years up to 40 years. We also were able to recognize our faculty and staff who were nominated by their peers for the Board of Regents Distinguished Service Awards. Mr. David Reiten, the president of our Board of Regents, was on hand to help us recognize these award winners and to thank those employees who have served the campus. We enjoyed a very good luncheon thanks to Sodexo Food Services, and we appreciated the assistance of Professor Neuharth as our emcee. It was nice to see so many of our employees joining us for our employee appreciation event.

List of Selected Activities and Events in President’s Office (since February 23, 2011):

February

- Hosted breakfast with VPAA candidate and President’s Staff
- SGA officer to discuss current legislation
- Dress for Success presentation in Beaver Dam
- Studies in the Community and Environment candidate forum
- Meeting with the Northern Sun Commissioner
- Trinity Board meeting
- SCE candidates interviews
- Meeting regarding student fees
- Business After Hours at Pure Honda
- Theater Departments “A Doll’s House” performance
- Conference call regarding the Center for Public Agencies and Nonprofit Organizations
- Interview by Red and Green regarding enrollment
- Meeting to discuss fundraising for athletics
- Solid Waste grant meeting
- Meeting regarding grant for career and technical training with DCB

- Conference call with UND’s geology professor Jason Schaefer regarding our geothermal project
- Hosted GALA dinner at our house
- President’s Staff meetings
- Noel Levitz Conference call regarding strategic planning
- SCE candidate forum
- Retention and Graduation Task Force
- Public Information Director candidate interview
- Alumni Board meeting

March

- State Board of Higher Education meeting in Bismarck
- President’s Staff meeting with VPAA candidate
- Regular meeting with Faculty Senate president
- Visited MSU Job Fair and greeted each booth
- Interviews with VPAA candidates
- Red and Green editor meeting
- Farewell party for Sandy Nordstrom
- Meeting with Faculty Athletic Representative
- Dinner with VPAA candidate
- Open forum with VPAA candidates

- Discussion about SCE candidate interviews
- Chancellor's Cabinet Conference call
- Faculty Senate
- Discussion about Faculty Senate's academic hall of fame program
- Regular meeting with Staff Senate president
- Great Plains Community Research and Service Center meeting
- Minot Symphony Orchestra performance
- President's Staff
- Office hour meetings with students
- Communications Disorder candidate meeting
- Conference call with EID Passport President
- One-on-one meetings with direct reports
- Advising meeting
- General education presentations to campus
- Visitation to Honors' Course discussion on Thoreau
- Presentation to the Senate Appropriation Committee in Bismarck
- Interviews of volleyball coach candidates
- Centennial Steering Committee
- Dinner with VPAA candidate
- President's Staff meeting with VPAA candidate
- Welcomed the Special Olympics event on campus
- VPAA open forum
- Local legislative forum at Minot Auditorium
- Hosted Energy Symposium Dinner and welcomed participants to the symposium and keynote speaker
- Attended three-day symposium
- Introduced Senator Kent Conrad and later Senator John Hoeven
- Interview by risk management consultants
- Meeting with EID Passport officials and Jerry Chavez at the MADC offices
- Private review party invitation at Space Aliens
- Graduate dean meeting
- Meeting with NDUS auditor
- Chancellor Cabinet conference call
- Review of BOR award nominations
- Meeting with computer science candidates

- Chancellor Cabinet meeting in Bismarck (changed to conference call due to blizzard)
- Promotion and tenure reviews
- Meeting with International Program director
- Conference call with EID Passport
- Graduation and Retention Task force meeting
- Meeting with COB dean
- Welcomed and met with Sias International representative
- President's Staff
- Computer science candidate
- Hosted lunch with JinjinChu from Sias
- Meeting with distinguished alumnus, Dr. John Allen
- Performance evaluations for direct reports
- Candidate in management for COB
- Center of Excellence planning
- Music faculty chamber concert
- Meeting with candidate for tenure
- Graduate dean
- Meeting to discuss tenure/promotion application
- Meeting with tenure committee
- Chancellor's Cabinet conference call
- Trinity Board of Directors meeting
- Interview by KMOT on legislative bill

April

- Great Plains Community Research and Service Center
- Visit to KX studios to discuss MSU coverage and relationship
- Meet with co-coordinators of Great Plains Center
- Office hour meetings with students
- Visit KMOT studios to discuss media coverage and relationship
- Visited Minot Daily News to meet with editor and publisher
- Attended the MSU at the Mall event
- President's Staff meeting
- Presented testimony on HCR 3046 in Bismarck at the Senate Education Committee hearing
- Regents executive committee
- Meeting with city officials regarding fees and a joint powers agreement
- State Board of Higher Education meeting by conference call
- Meeting with students
- Who's Who Luncheon and welcome
- Regular meeting with Staff Senate president
- Red and Green editor meeting

- Meeting with education representatives regarding the Early Childhood major proposal
- Invited commencement speaker to attend our ceremony in May
- Employee Appreciation Banquet
- Faculty Senate meeting
- Meeting with DCB dean
- Executive Steering Committee for Centennial
- Call to Greystone Group and Washington representative
- Interviews with Vet Director candidates
- Meeting with Dr. Larrie Wanberg from UND regarding civic engagement and community development
- Reception hosted by Connie Severson and Connie Ahart
- President's Staff meeting
- TIAA-CREF meeting
- MADC president for lunch
- Admissions meeting
- Meet with Clint Severson, Connie Ahart, Eric Severson, and Achim Henkel; accompanied them on a tour of the campus
- Welcome at Market Place for Kids in Anne Nicole Nelson Hall
- Host luncheon for visitors
- Visit to Clear Channel Radio studios

Concluding Remarks

I am the first to admit my love for the changing seasons in North Dakota, the distinctive change in weather, colors, and activities. These changes are, as many of us who were raised in the Great Plains understand, attractive and exciting times that mark our lives and our experiences. I must admit, though, that this winter has been a special challenge. It will certainly serve us well to appreciate even more the spring weather, the sounds of the migrating birds, and the dry and not-slippery pavement one must cross to pick up the newspaper early in the morning. Some might see the special challenges of our legislative session in the same light, that those challenges make a non-legislative year even more rewarding and satisfying. I think that both—the severe weather and our legislative session this year—help us appreciate the change in our season and the remarkable and welcomed ability to focus fully on helping our students learn, read, discover new ideas, and to think about how they may be able to contribute meaningfully to the lives of others. That's what all of us are concerned about, and that's what all of us at Minot State University think is our most important job. Thanks to all of you for helping us keep our focus on that essential responsibility.

David Fuller
April 13, 2011