

**August 23, 2012**

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

**FROM: David Fuller**

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

## **General Overview**

### **Current**

#### Convocation

We were pleased to welcome and introduce our new faculty and staff, and to greet all of our returning faculty and staff. Our senate presidents reported on their plans for the year, and I devoted my time to a review of last year, with its many challenges and successes, and to an explanation of plans for this year. A point I wanted to make is that we should not forget our essential responsibility to focus squarely on quality learning and the success of our students. At a time when there is considerable public discussion about audits and accountability, we shouldn't forget why we are here. I also touched on the NDUS proposal for a 3-Tier System and the challenges we are facing with enrollment, housing, and finances. I pledged to prepare a proposal to offer to the State Board of Higher Education and to the Legislature to seek support for flood-related damages, housing needs, and financial shortages we are experiencing as a result of the flood and the impact of the oil industry.

#### Keynote speaker

Jennifer Joslin, the current president of a national organization for advising, spoke about the essential role of academic advising as a way to help students progress toward graduation. She also led workshops with faculty and staff on advising and mentoring. She shared with us compelling information about the value of academic advising in the work we do.

#### Address to Dakota College at Bottineau faculty and staff

I spoke to the faculty and staff at Dakota College at Bottineau, to underscore the need for their retention strategies. I also discussed the 3-Tier System proposal and the upcoming legislative session.

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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. Since no University Cabinet meeting was held in February, this report covers two months instead of one. The report is distributed widely to keep the community up to date on current initiatives, pending projects, 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 his/her respective senate or senate president, the President's Office, or the university president directly.

### First-Day Enrollment

The enrollment registered on the first day showed a decrease of 2.5% (approximately 85 students) in headcount compared to the first day of classes last year. We were advised to expect continued enrollment challenges during the first three years after the flood, so the decline should not have been a surprise. But it was a surprise. Our many recruitment efforts, student support service initiatives on campus, fine academic programs, athletic enhancements, and campus improvements led me to expect better numbers. The official numbers in the fourth week should be higher than these, but we will continue to study the enrollment categories to understand the first-day numbers.

We had many areas that showed encouraging growth, including transfers, part-time students, international students, and in a host of states (Texas, Florida, California, Colorado, and Minnesota). While Canadian enrollments and Native American enrollments declined, we experienced notable continued growth in non-Canadian international students. First-year student enrollments and North Dakota enrollments declined, as did Ward County and some oil impacted counties. However, a number of other counties registered growth, such as Burleigh, Cass, and Grand Forks.

An initial review of these data suggests that housing and the oil industry continue to impact our enrollments. Our Grow North Dakota tuition plan and our athletic initiatives appear to have supported well out of state and international growth, as well as selected counties in North Dakota. Our Fargo and Bismarck initiatives are leading to notable increases, but we remain concerned about enrollment declines at the Minot Air Force Base. It is too soon to know the impact of our retention initiatives, but the next few weeks should reveal how well we are doing in that regard. We will continue to monitor enrollments and related initiatives.

### 3-Tier System Proposal and responses solicited

Chancellor Shirvani and the interim academic chancellor developed a plan that defines our institutions according to three tiers: community colleges, four-year universities, and the research institutions. The plan identifies changes in admission standards by tier, out-of-state tuition models, a per-credit tuition change, assignment of remedial and dual-credit courses to the community colleges, programs for adult learners, and changes to waver authority. The chancellor provided all the institutions with a detailed draft of these changes, and has kindly asked that the campuses provide input to the proposal. The draft has been provided to the campus and input solicited. We will be compiling the responses and conducting analyses of our current practices and the predicted impact of the features of the proposal. The campus input is due before the end of August.

### Discretionary professional leave

In June I took a discretionary leave of 30-calendar days to pursue professional development goals and objectives. I spent that time reading a variety of scholarly texts on higher education, some Thoreau scholarship, novels and poetry, and a number of back issues of magazines, such as a pile of editions of Harper's and The New Yorker. I also spent time reading texts on digital photography and attempting to figure out how to use a new Pentax digital camera I purchased. This discretionary leave opportunity was made available through the State Board of Higher Education policy that allows presidents to take a 30-calendar day leave every five years. This is the first such leave I have taken in my nine years as president. My proposal to the SBHE and

Chancellor Goetz basically sought this time for concerted and focused reading on professional topics and my own scholarly interests. I found the time rewarding and professional valuable.

Announced plan to appoint a council to examine our campus finances

As announced last year, we needed to work to reduce our budget to respond to the enrollment declines and budget deficit resulting from the impact of the flood. I announced that we would prepare a proposal to seek support from the SBHE and Legislature, but in the meantime, we would need to proceed with the second-year plan to reduce our base budget by another 3%, if not more. I will appoint a finance and budget council to review our current budget and expenditure and determine what areas we could identify needing additional support and areas with potential room for reductions. I will ask that council to define a set of criteria and a list of data to collect to guide their work. Both academic and non-academic areas will be reviewed in this process. Rather than making calls for across-the-board reductions, this process should allow us to identify potential areas based on the relationship to mission and performance. In view of the first-day enrollment numbers, it is possible that we will need to revise the needed amount of the reductions.

**List of Selected Activities and Events in President’s Office (since May 16, 2012):**

**May**

- Meeting with Chamber’s Diplomat’s Committee to discuss MSU
- Opening 11<sup>th</sup> Ave. bids
- Meeting with Dr. Bobilev and Dr. Koczon
- Meeting with Karen Krebsbach
- Athletic Hall of Fame Meeting
- Board meeting of the Minot Area Development Corporation
- Attended the Red Cross Office Reopening Ceremony
- Staff member’s going away party
- Adopt a Neighborhood community service program meeting
- Luncheon with Dr. Antosh with NDCPD
- Attended MSU’s Bismarck graduation ceremony and celebration
- President’s Staff meetings
- Meeting with art faculty to discuss centennial logo design
- Interview with Andrea Johnson from the Minot Daily News
- Visit by Butch Raymond, the NSIC Commissioner
- Capital Campaign committee meeting
- Meeting with Staff Senate
- Meeting to discuss the office of Sponsored Programs position
- Athletic staff meeting
- Meeting with Jonathan Wagner and Mark Timbrook regarding MSU book
- Trinity Board of Directors meeting
- Meeting to discuss fraud alert process
- Annual evaluation with Chancellor Goetz in Bismarck
- Conference call with Trinity CEO

- Vacation

**June**

- Discretionary 30-day professional development leave.

**July**

- Campus visit by the new Chancellor; presentation at our University Cabinet meeting, tour of campus, and accompanied him to Dakota College at Bottineau
- Attended Summer Theatre performance, “Breaking up is hard to Do”
- Centennial Committee meeting
- Chancellor’s Cabinet meeting in Bismarck
- State Board of Higher Education meeting in Bismarck
- Meeting with Clint Severson and Conni Ahart
- Press Conference to announce formal membership in the NCAA Division II
- Meeting with Congressman Berg’s staff member
- Chamber Board of Directors meeting
- Meeting with football coach
- Interviews of men’s basketball coach candidates
- Welcome to the Easter Seals Project Action meeting on campus
- Meeting with Neil Sharpe to discuss GPCRSC
- Trinity Quality Committee meeting
- Root Beer Floats fund raiser
- Summer theatre performance of “Crazy for You.”
- Board of Regents Executive Committee meeting

- Interview of teacher education faculty candidate
- Walked in the Minot State University ND State Fair parade
- Luncheon meeting with Steve Pederson
- Interview of residence hall director candidate and open forums
- Centennial logo meeting with Patrick Sheldon, Marv Semrau, and Bill Harbort
- President's Staff Retreat at Sage Hill Bed and Breakfast
- Radio interview with Steve Bakken with Bismarck radio station about MSU
- MSU Luau event at the State Fair
- Attended State Fair Special Friends Reception at the Carousel Pub

#### August

- Four-year school meeting in Bismarck with chancellor and presidents
- President's Staff meetings
- Registrars open house
- Meeting with Gary Rabe regarding RCJC
- Annual expectations meeting with Sodexo
- Contract reviews
- Barnes and Noble year in review
- Great Tomato Festival
- Call to Jeff Urlaub with MEP
- MADC Board of Directors meeting
- Alumni event in Bismarck
- Campus clean up
- Meeting with Neil Sharpe and Lenore Koczon regarding Great Plains Center

- Welcome at the new faculty breakfast meeting
- President' Staff meetings
- GPCCRS Energy Impact solutions Conference welcome
- Welcome to the Affordable Housing Forum in Aleshire
- Accompanied visitors to MSU for a Walk Minot Event on Campus
- All campus Convocation meeting and address
- Lunch with visiting presenter
- Attended the three college meetings
- Convocation address to faculty and staff at Dakota College at Bottineau
- Greeted parents and new students during the move-in day at the residence halls
- Interview of assistant athletic director candidate
- Participated in a CETL connections event at the zoo; worked with first-year students and faculty painting the Bob Cat enclosure.
- Welcomed Job Corp Executive Management Program attendees at the opening breakfast
- President's Staff
- Meeting with Terry Eckmann and Dave Rochholz regarding Wellness Center
- Chamber Board of Directors meeting
- Interview Assist VPAA candidate
- Athletic department staff meeting
- Club Fair in the Quad

Wishing all of you a productive and rewarding academic year.

David Fuller  
August 23, 2012