Meet and Confer

1/30/09

Present: Chancellor McCormick, Leslie Mercer, Judy Borgen, Patrick Opatz, Mary Campbell, Barbara Miller, Mary Muenchow, Bill Brady, Mary Leary, JoAnne Chabot, Chris Dale, Mike Sharp, Sandra Jessen, Mike Hodapp, Alicia Reed, Jim Anderson, Bruce Holzschuh, and Rich Wheeler

**Agenda Items**

**Minnesota State Colleges and Universities plan for Metropolitan State University (Leslie Mercer)** Chancellor McCormick stated that a study has been done of the program and demographic needs of the thirteen county Twin Cities region. The study determined that there is a shortage of baccalaureate and licensure programs to meet the needs of the region. There is also a huge demand for non-credit professional development. The Chancellor requested five million dollars be granted to Metropolitan State University to develop a growth plan to meet the needs of the region along with our other state universities who are establishing degree programs in the Twin Cities for place bound students. The Board did not approve the five million dollars to move forward with this plan due to the economy; however, this will be revisited at a future date. In the meantime the OOC will move forward with a seven point plan with the leaders of the Metro Alliance campuses to determine program demand and where program duplication exists. This would include looking at how student services are provided on co-located campuses. Can there be more cooperative services offered for students which would take care of all of their needs? Leslie Mercer noted that the growth plan looks at a need to serve up to 20,000 students in the Twin Cities at Metro State University and the other state university programs is one that we will need to meet according to the study done to determine the educational needs of the region.

**Legislative Update (Mary Davenport)** The Governor’s budget plan was released earlier this week. According to his budget request to the legislature, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities would see a reduction of 147 million dollars for the two-year budget period FY 10 and FY 11. Next Tuesday all of the constituent groups will be at the Capitol to testify to the legislature. The Chancellor noted that he is adamant that these groups need to present a positive unified picture of the important role that higher education will play during these difficult financial times and that we are an efficient cost effective way to provide the citizens of Minnesota an excellent education. The Chancellor believes that negative bickering between constituent groups does not benefit us during these difficult economic times. We are also waiting for the federal stimulus package to make its through Congress and there is hope that these federal funds could help ease our budget reduction. We should know more by the February 13th break time for Congress about the federal stimulus package.

**Budget Update (Judy Borgen)** Judy Borgen passed out budget updates that showed how the 20 million dollar unallotment in November was handled by the system and the possibility that depending on the February forecast for revenue that we may be dealing with further cuts in the FY 09 budget before the end of June. Judy wanted to clarify that the reduction of budget proposed by the Governor for FY 10 and FY 11 was in addition to the 20 million unallotment, and possible further reductions for FY 09 which makes budget planning even more challenging given these unknowns? The Board of Trustees will hold a special meeting on February 12 with the Finance Committee and the Educational Policy committees to review the Governor’s budget proposal. We are still trying to get an idea of what the budget cuts are going to be like at the campus level and how this will affect our services and programs to students? More discussion was held regarding the possible impact that the federal stimulus package would possibly have on the system budget for FY 10 and 11? Most of this funding would go to funding campus building and infrastructure projects on each of the campuses and would, most likely, not make a major impact on operating budgets. However, it is still too early to know what the sum effect of the stimulus package would have on operating budget deficits until the legislation is approved by Congress and signed by President Obama. Secretary Anderson distributed the MSUAASF executive board statement regarding the current budget crisis. Chancellor McCormick noted that he appreciated our statement and looks forward to working with us during the legislative session to get the message out how important the work that we do to assist students achieve their educational goals during these challenging economic times.

**Online Learning Initiative Update (Patrick Opatz)** Governor Pawlenty recently challenged the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to have 25% of our courses offered to students in an online format by 2015. Currently 9.2 percent of all registered credits at MnSCU colleges and universities were through online courses. This challenge by Governor Pawlenty has started a conversation at the Office of the Chancellor that we need to address as a system what is our goal for online education now and in the future? Vice Chancellor Linda Baer has pointed out that there needs to be parameters for what exactly is defined as an online course? It is important to remember also that the faculty member who teaches the online course works just as hard and has the same work load as in-classroom courses. The other issue that needs to be addressed is whether or not each campus needs to have at least 25% of its curriculum online, or if this is required of the system as a whole? Governor Pawlenty is aware of the system online initiatives so far, including the minnesotaonline service center located in Perham which assists students locate online courses offered at various colleges

**Technology Update-Oracle Conversion (Joanne Chabot)** Final testing of the Oracle system operating conversion is being conducted. We have so far seen no major problems related to the conversion that would possibly impact the roll out by Thursday, February 12th. An Oracle conversion swat team has been established at the Office of the Chancellor to be ready when conversion begins to deal with any major problems. In addition, we have designated specific individuals at each campus that will handle individual campus issues that come up as a result of the conversion. Secretary Anderson asked Joanne if she could have our members notified of who the conversion contact person(s) are for each of the state universities to help assist them with conversion related problems if they occur. Joanne noted that this information will be provided to MSUAASF members by the conversion team in the near future. The Oracle conversion will allow more software programs to be able to be run with our system software, there will be more Oracle experts to help us with programming and support issues, and Oracle will save the system 1.5 million dollars in operating costs compared to RDB. We are hoping that there will be no major problems during the conversion process; however, in a worst-case scenario we are allowing four days to complete the conversion thus the reason for why we are shooting for a Thursday, February 12th conversion date so that any problems may be worked on over the weekend.

Respectfully submitted by Secretary Anderson