

**UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA**

**BOARD OF REGENTS**

**Faculty, Staff and Student Affairs Committee**

**December 9, 2004**

A meeting of the Faculty, Staff and Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Regents was held on Thursday, December 9, 2004, at 2:45 p.m. in the West Committee Room, 600 McNamara Alumni Center.

Regents present: Patricia Simmons, presiding; Peter Bell, Frank Berman, David Metzen, and Lakeesha Ransom.

Staff present: President Robert Bruininks; Chancellor Samuel Schuman; Senior Vice President and Provost Thomas Sullivan; Senior Vice Presidents Frank Cerra and Robert Jones; Vice President Carol Carrier; Executive Director Ann Cieslak; and Provost David Carl.

Student Representatives: Johanna Farmer and Bobak Ha'Eri.

**BOARD OF REGENTS POLICY: GRIEVANCE PROCESS**

Vice President Carrier introduced Senior Vice President Jones and Carolyn Chalmers, Grievance Office Program Director, who summarized amendments to Board of Regents Policy: *Grievance Process*. Jones reviewed the process by which the policy and corresponding administrative procedures have been revised. Chalmers explained that changing the terminology from grievance to conflict resolution is the only significant amendment to the policy.

In response to a question from Regent Bell, Chalmers replied that administrative procedures will be reviewed to ensure that the president, senior administrators, or deans will not review a grievance made against them. Carrier stated that the administrative procedures and other related materials will be provided to committee members prior to consideration of the adoption of the policy amendments.

**GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS UPDATE**

Victor Bloomfield, Interim Dean of the Graduate School, and Abu Jalal, President of the Graduate and Professional Students Assembly (GAPSA), presented the committee with information about graduate students at the University and policy questions for Board consideration, as detailed in the docket materials. Bloomfield highlighted the following demographic figures during his presentation:

- 33 percent of students enrolled on the Twin Cities campus and 40 percent of degrees awarded are graduate and professional students;
- International students comprise 25 percent of graduate and professional students and 40 percent of students in engineering, math, and the physical sciences;
- Despite a recent decline in international student applications and admissions, the number of enrolled international graduate students has remained steady over the past five years.

Jalal focused on the challenges faced by current graduate and professional students at the University, including a lack of on- or near-campus housing, increased health care costs, and stagnant stipends for teaching and research assistants.

In response to a question from Regent Ransom, Bloomfield explained that there is a great discrepancy between the tuition support provided to research assistants in the sciences as compared to teaching assistants in the College of Liberal Arts.

Responding to a question from Regent Bell, Bloomfield clarified that the 25 percent increase in the number of graduate students between 2000-2001 and 2003-2004 is partly due to a registration change that enables students to more easily prolong their degree pursuit without losing enrollment status.

Regent Simmons requested a future presentation on the goals and competitiveness of the graduate school.

### **EMPLOYEE HEALTH CARE BENEFITS UPDATE**

Vice President Carrier introduced Senior Vice President Cerra, Director of Employee Benefits Dann Chapman, and Chair of the Benefits Advisory Committee (BAC) Gavin Watt. The presenters updated the Committee on the University's health benefits plan (UPlan), as detailed in the docket materials.

Cerra reported that the cost of health benefits per employee is projected to rise 7.2 percent between 2004 and 2005, which is significantly less than the national average. Chapman described how University administrators and the BAC are addressing the two primary UPlan goals of cost control and health improvement by focusing on future plan design, potential pharmacy cost savings, and the employee wellness program. Cerra added that the greatest pathways for controlling future costs are screening/prevention, self-care, lifestyle changes, and disease management.

In response to a question from Regent Bell, Cerra explained that currently the University is not a part of the governor's cooperative purchasing initiative, but that he has had discussions with the Governor's Office about participating. He added that he expects it will be a component of the purchasing contracts reviewed by the Board in May 2005.

In response to a question from Bell, Chapman indicated that the administration has examined converting the current personal savings account plan option to a more traditional health care savings account. Cerra added that health care savings accounts will be considered as part of the new UPlan design.

### **CONSENT REPORT**

A motion was made and seconded, and the committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Consent Report, which contained the following items for consideration:

- Appointment of Linda Thrane as Vice President for University Relations effective January 2, 2005;
- Appointment of Patrick Bailey and William F. Messerli to the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum Foundation Board of Trustees.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

Vice President Carrier referred the committee to the Information Items contained in the docket.

The meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

**ANN D. CIESLAK**  
**Executive Director and**  
**Corporate Secretary**