

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

BOARD OF REGENTS

Educational Planning & Policy Committee

June 10,

2004

A meeting of the Educational Planning and Policy Committee of the Board of Regents was held on Thursday, June 10, 2004, at 1:30 p.m. in the East Committee Room, 600 McNamara Alumni Center.

Regents present: Maureen Reed, presiding, Anthony Baraga, Peter Bell, William Hogan, Richard McNamara, and Patricia Simmons.

Staff present: President Robert Bruininks; Senior Vice President & Provost Christine Maziar; Vice Presidents Kathryn Brown, Sandra Gardebring, and Charles Muscoplat; Interim Vice President David Hamilton; Executive Director Ann Cieslak; and Provost David Carl.

Student Representatives present: Bobak Ha'Eri and Joshua Jacobsen.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM POLICY ISSUES

Regent Reed stated that the purpose of this presentation is to provide background for a future discussion of Board of Regents Policy: *Academic Freedom*. Senior Vice President Maziar and Raymond Duvall, professor of political science and chair, Task Force on Academic Freedom (Task Force), led the discussion. Maziar added that the Task Force was commissioned in 2003 to assess the University's current understanding of academic freedom and its implications and to develop strategies for helping the University and the broader community embrace its values.

Duvall summarized the findings of the Task Force (as found in the docket materials) as follows:

- Academic freedom is important at both the individual and institutional level and for the University's mission.
- Academic freedom is a fragile concept that requires sustained attention by the University's leadership, faculty, and students.
- In spite of its complexity and fragility, steps can and should be taken to reinvigorate the University's commitment to academic freedom.

With respect to Board of Regents Policy: *Academic Freedom*, Duvall advised that the policy itself may be silent on some important findings of the Task Force, such as the nature of academic freedom, its differential application across the University community, and the responsibilities of those with academic freedom. Maziar commented that the policy also is silent on the protective and affirmative components of academic freedom, but the report of the Task Force has greatly enhanced understanding of the affirmative component, which contributes much to the value of academic freedom and compels its protection.

In response to a number of questions, Duvall indicated that:

- The report explicitly acknowledges that there are recognized limitations to academic freedom.
- Among the criteria used to determine when academic freedom is or is not appropriate are peer review and the resolution of disagreements through institution-wide conversation and debate.
- The Task Force discussed at great length how to reconcile academic freedom with external scrutiny and the necessity for transparency in a public institution. As a land-grant institution, the University is committed to

serving the public and is responsive to public institutions, but the University must balance its public obligations against potential limitations and constraints on the pursuit of knowledge.

Simmons noted that the discussion has emphasized the importance of public universities as the arena in which important public debates need to occur and the obligation of the University to seize opportunities to engage the public in such scholarly discussions.

Reed stated that public misperceptions about academic freedom require that the University be vigilant in this area. She requested that upcoming discussions of the policy include suggestions regarding the Board's responsibilities regarding academic freedom and its advancement

BOARD OF REGENTS POLICY:

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA PRESS

Senior Vice President Maziar introduced Victor Bloomfield, Dean, Graduate School, who reviewed proposed amendments to Board of Regents Policy: *University of Minnesota Press*. The proposed changes align the policy with Board of Regents Policy: *Reservation and Delegation of Authority*. The item will return for action at a future meeting of the committee.

BOARD OF REGENTS POLICY:

ACCESSIONING/DEACCESSIONING MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

Senior Vice President Maziar reviewed proposed amendments to Board of Regents Policy: *Accessioning/Deaccessioning Museum Collections*. The proposed changes align the policy with Board of Regents Policy: *Reservation and Delegation of Authority*. The item will return for action at a future meeting of the committee.

COMMISSIONED INTERDISCIPLINARY INITIATIVES

President Bruininks, Senior Vice President Maziar, and Vice President Muscoplat led the discussion of the Commissioned Interdisciplinary Initiatives (Commissioned Initiatives). For background, Maziar recalled that the 1998 initiatives were a response to a political and economic context that was poised to invest in the University. In return, the University had agreed to be accountable, develop an orientation toward deliverables, and provide follow-up reports to the legislature. She noted that in 2002 the Commission on Excellence found that in the areas of improving quality, developing centrality, and leveraging resources the University had delivered on all of its commitments under the 1998 Initiatives. In 2003 the University launched a formal external review processes and, although these reviews continue, it has become apparent that the 1998 Initiatives are now institutionalized and should no longer be considered initiatives. In Fall 2004 the committee will receive a capstone report on the 1998 Initiatives.

Bruininks defined interdisciplinary initiatives, observed that the Commissioned Initiatives are an outgrowth of the 1998 Initiatives, and stressed that support for interdisciplinary work is essential if the University is to continue as a great research and educational institution. The Commissioned Initiatives were launched after consultation with many individuals both inside and outside the University and are critical to the University's commitment to maintain distinctive academic strengths, even in difficult financial times. He listed the eight areas of study comprising the Commissioned Initiatives, the criteria used to select them, and their relationship to the University's strategic planning process (as contained in the docket materials and associated handouts).

To give the committee a concrete example of the initiatives in action, Muscoplat briefly summarized the *Healthy Foods, Health Lives* initiative, described the natural advantages of the University and Minnesota in these disciplines, and suggested that it is a propitious time for these topics at the University, within government, labor, and industry, and within society in general. He added that the goal of this integrative, interdisciplinary work is to foster discoveries of the future rather than leaving them to chance.

In response to several questions from Simmons, Bruininks emphasized that budgeting is essential to the success of

initiatives; that initiatives can succeed only when core academic areas are strengthened and a great deal of effort is invested in involving those outside the University; and that accountability occurs through existing channels.

In response to a question from Bell, Bruininks stated that there is no single answer to the life cycle of an initiative because good ideas not only survive but they evolve and change. Continued investments in an initiative are justified, however, only when they are evaluated and aligned with the University's strategic plan and performance report.

In response to a question from Regent Baraga, Bruininks indicated that every effort will be made to leverage existing physical resources, but that when Commissioned Initiatives involve capital investments, they will become capital budget priorities only on the basis of very promising outcomes.

In response to a number of questions, Bruininks noted that the organizational structures required to support the initiatives are not completely built but will evolve and change, and that the language used to describe the Commissioned Initiatives was carefully chosen to create public interest and public dialogue in order to link them to pressing public issues. He also assured the committee that benchmarks would be developed and that initiatives would be evaluated relative to continuing budget challenges.

CONSENT REPORT

A motion was made and seconded, and the committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the following, as detailed in the revised Consent Report and the docket materials:

New academic programs:

- College of Education and Human Development – New Undergraduate Certificate Program in Adult Literacy
- Institute of Technology and College of Natural Resources – New

Bachelor of Bio-based Products Engineering (B.B.P.E.) Degree Program

- Discontinuation of Academic Programs and Majors:
- College of Natural Resources – Bachelor of Bio-based Products

Engineering Concentration

Change in Transcript Notation:

- College of Liberal Arts – Second Language Requirement

INFORMATION ITEMS

Executive Vice President and Provost Maziar referred committee members to the docket materials, urging that they pay particular attention to the news release indicating that the University had sought and received accreditation from the Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

ANN D. CIESLAK
Executive Director and
Corporate Secretary