

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

BOARD OF REGENTS

Work Session

September 12, 2002

A work session of the Board of Regents was held on Thursday, September 12, 2002, at 9:45 a.m. in Room 241, Kiehle Building at the University of Minnesota Crookston.

Regents present: Maureen Reed, presiding; Robert Bergland, Frank Berman, Dallas Bohnsack, William Hogan, Jean Keffeler, David Metzen, H. Bryan Neel, and Lakeesha Ransom.

Staff present: Interim President Robert Bruininks; General Counsel Mark Rotenberg; Executive Director Ann Cieslak; and Associate Vice President Richard Pfitzenreuter.

Chair Reed called the work session to order, indicating that the purpose of the session was to discuss the issues and principles related to the possibility of a joint use football stadium for the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Vikings. In Spring 2002, the Minnesota Legislature passed legislation requesting that the University of Minnesota meet with the Minnesota Vikings in order to reach an agreement on the design and operation of a joint Gopher-Viking football stadium to be owned by the University and located on the Twin Cities campus. The legislature appropriated funding for a pre-design proposal and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the University and the Vikings on all issues relating to the design, construction, governance, and operation of the facility. Reed stressed that the discussion at this meeting will not involve details, but will relate only to the policy positions related to the possible joint venture.

It was reported that a University Stadium Steering & Policy Committee was formed to provide process oversight and identify policy issues. Five principles have been proposed for the Board's review to articulate the University's policy issues and objectives. Interim President Bruininks stated that these principles were developed because he believes that it is important to emphasize at the outset that the University cannot agree to any arrangement which places the University at financial risk or in any way jeopardizes its academic mission. The benefits to the University must reflect whatever contributions the public and the University make to any joint effort with the Vikings. If it is possible to reach an agreement on a joint venture that will enhance the mission and resources of the University, the administration will present a proposal to the Board for review and approval. Absent that enhancement, a proposal will not be forwarded.

Associate Vice President Pfitzenreuter provided a brief background review and General Counsel Rotenberg talked briefly about the MOU and its requirements.

The Board then engaged in a lengthy discussion regarding the language for each of the five proposed principles that addressed: 1) University mission; 2) financial benefit; 3) University community; 4) intercollegiate athletics; and 5) project development. The principles were presented as follows:

UNIVERSITY MISSION

Respect the University's fundamental academic mission

The University of Minnesota's fundamental teaching, research, and public service mission must never be subordinated or diverted to other private/for-profit objectives or other objectives unrelated to our mission. The academic values of the institution must be preserved and promoted in all aspects of stadium planning. In respecting the University mission, a financial firewall must be created to assure that no University resources are placed at risk beyond those expressly agreed upon in the MOU. Extra care must be taken to protect the University from pressures to use the facility for purposes incompatible with the mission of the University.

FINANCIAL BENEFIT

Ensure Financial benefit to the University

The stadium project must generate financial benefits for the University fully commensurate with the University's contribution and participation in this project, financial and otherwise. The University is a public institution with public responsibilities that go far beyond athletic activities and programs, and the financial benefits of this project must accrue to the University's overall mission.

UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

Promote physical and programmatic integration with the Twin Cities campus community and adjacent neighborhoods

- The stadium must be designed, constructed, and operated in a manner that is fully compatible and integrated with the University campus environment and the commercial and residential neighborhoods near the stadium site. The University must be a good neighbor and respect neighborhood needs during the planning process. The facility will exist on the Twin Cities campus for 365 days per year and must be planned and developed in order to maximize opportunities to support the University's year-round teaching, research, and public service missions.
- In order to advance these campus and community priorities, the University must maintain effective control over all aspects of the design, development, and ongoing management of the stadium.

INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

Enhance the Gopher football game-day experience and increase community enthusiasm for Gopher football

Bringing Gopher football back to campus should qualitatively improve the experience for our student-athletes and fans, enhance student life on campus, increase alumni and community support for the University, and build a strong sense of community.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Assure project design and construction meet the highest standards of fairness, integrity, and sound business practices

The University must retain final control of the project development process in order to assure that it meets the most stringent requirements of fairness and good stewardship in the expenditure of public funding. Maintaining

the confidence of all those with a stake in its success — faculty, students, and staff; contractors and vendors; neighbors, public officials and government units; and all Minnesotans — is essential to the ultimate success of the project.

Regent Berman stressed the importance of having an absolute requirement and definition regarding any financial exposure the University is prepared to accept. Any financial risks to the University must be specifically defined and any agreement must reflect the immense contribution the land assembly would provide. He also believes that governance of the stadium, the land, and its use should reside with the University. Regent Keffeler added that the principles should go beyond protection for the University's interest; they should provide that the University will advance and be enhanced from a joint venture. Board members agreed that the principles should state the requirement to enhance the University's mission. Regent Metzen added that he believes the guiding principle should be to protect the University's teaching, research, and public service mission and all other principles derive from this central one.

Board members talked about the potential effects a stadium on campus would have on the students and the wider community and the importance of assuring that the effects be positive and not cause harm. They expressed concern about the long-term effect on the campus, the community, and the financial position of the University. They also noted that the University must be protected from pressure to have incompatible events at the facility to relieve the financial burden.

Regarding governance of the project, the Board specified that a separate principle should be written to state that the University will retain governance control of all aspects of the project.

Chair Reed summarized the key points of the discussion, indicating that the six principles are needed and they must include provisions for:

- advancement of the University's fundamental academic, research, and service mission;
- explicit definition of the University's investment and financial exposure;
- assurance for advancement of the quality of the campus and community life;
- separate principles relating to governance and management; and
- advancement for intercollegiate athletics at the University, the individual athlete, and the student experience as a whole.

Reed stated that the University's interest should remain foremost throughout these deliberations and that the Board of Regents will want assurance that all of the principles are met before considering moving forward with any action. The administration should incorporate Board comments into the principles, and a copy of the revised principles will be kept on file in the Board Office.

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

ANN D. CIESLAK
Executive Director and
Corporate Secretary

©2005 Regents of the University of Minnesota. All rights reserved.

[Trouble seeing the text?](#) | [Contact U of M](#) | [Privacy](#)

The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

Last modified on September 7, 2005