

Year 2002-03

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

BOARD OF REGENTS

PUBLIC FORUM ON THE UNIVERSITY BUDGET

Tuesday, June 17, 2003

A meeting of the Board of Regents was held on Tuesday, June 17, 2003, at 11:30 a.m. in the Boardroom, 600 McNamara Alumni Center.

Regents present: William Hogan, presiding; Dallas Bohnsack, John Frobenius, and Lakeesha Ransom. Clyde Allen and Patricia Simmons participated via telephone.

Staff present: President Robert Bruininks; Vice President and Executive Vice Provost Christine Maziar; Vice President Kathryn Brown; Executive Director Ann Cieslak; and Associate Vice President Richard Pfitzenreuter.

Regent William Hogan welcomed those in attendance at the Board of Regents Public Forum on the University Budget. He noted that the University of Minnesota campuses at Crookston, Duluth, Morris, and Rochester were connected to the meeting via interactive television. He reviewed the procedures to be followed for the meeting and stated that the Board of Regents intends to vote on the proposed budget at their June 26, 2003 meeting.

Hogan then called forward the following individuals:

Eric Dyer, President, Minnesota Student Association

Mr. Dyer addressed the impact of the proposed budget on students. He expressed a concern that additional financial burdens on students will decrease their level of involvement in campus activities, thus diminishing their student experience. He cautioned that it is important that the University's image not be negatively impacted by its current budget situation.

Fred Morrison, Chair, Benefits Advisory Committee

Professor Morrison stated that the proposed budget is viewed as the 'least worse' option by many faculty and staff. He expressed concern about the impact of increased employee-paid healthcare at the same time that salaries are frozen. He acknowledged an understanding of the need to control healthcare costs, but noted that the University's proposed changes in healthcare benefits are more significant than those proposed at other Big Ten institutions.

Suzanne Savanick, Member, Campus Sustainability Network

Ms. Savanick encouraged the University to explore ways to reduce short-term and long-term costs by integrating sustainability principles into campus education, outreach, research, planning, and facilities management programs. She also proposed that the Board adopt a policy on sustainability that would encourage addressing sustainability in education, partnerships with businesses, and campus operations.

Daniel Feeney, Chair, Faculty Consultative Committee

Professor Feeney raised several cautions regarding the proposed budget, including diminishing faculty and staff morale, increasing financial burdens on students, and declining investments in classroom upgrades. He also expressed a concern about the University's ability to remain competitive with its peers during this period of financial challenges.

Daniel Rivera, Facilities Management employee, Twin Cities Campus

Mr. Rivera voiced his opposition to the recent reorganization of Facilities Management on the Twin Cities campus. He

suggested that additional management cuts could have reduced the number of employee layoffs.

Gina Nelson, Vice President, Minnesota Student Association

Ms. Nelson suggested that the University is sending a mixed message by encouraging students to become more involved on campus and in their community, while increasing tuition. Increased tuition will result in some students working more, which will reduce their ability to be involved on-campus and off-campus. She also expressed concerns that more students will become disengaged from the University if they move off-campus to reduce expenses.

Todd Powell, President, Graduate and Professional Student Assembly

Mr. Powell noted that the states 'high-tuition, high-aid' approach to higher education does not serve graduate and professional students who are not eligible for state grants. He is concerned that increasing tuition will make graduate and professional programs less competitive. He encouraged the University to provide additional funding for fellowships and graduate assistantships.

Jacob Elo, Chair, Student Representatives to the Board of Regents

Mr. Elo urged the Board not to increase the burden on students any further, if economic conditions change, collective bargaining fails, or if anticipated financial savings do not materialize. He expressed appreciation for additional funds for need-based financial aid, but stressed that more is needed to offset the size of tuition increases.

Marilyn Speedie, Immediate Past Chair, Twin Cities Dean's Council

Dean Speedie commended President Bruininks on the proposed budget and noted the effort to balance the impact on students, collegiate units and employees. She used the College of Pharmacy as an example of how individual colleges will be impacted by a reduction in state support, and encouraged the Board to continue to build public support for the University's work.

Randy Croce, Chair, Council of Academic and Professional Administrators

Mr. Croce discussed the impact of proposed changes in healthcare benefits on University employees and commended the administration for supporting a two percent (of salary) cap on out-of-pocket expenses. He also complimented the administration on the consultative process regarding healthcare benefits and suggested that it be a model for other issues. Mr. Croce requested that the University acknowledge the contributions of the scores of P&A employees who have received notices of non-renewal or have decided to retire early.

Several Regents noted that the comments would be helpful as they consider the University's proposed budget. Regent Hogan thanked the presenters for their participation.

The meeting adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

ANN D. CIESLAK
Executive Director and
Corporate Secretary

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Last modified on September 7, 2005