

**MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Agenda Item Summary Sheet

Committee: Academic and Student Affairs

Date of Meeting: May 18, 2010

Agenda Item: Annual Update on Board Accountability Dashboard

Proposed
Policy Change

Approvals
Required by
Policy

Other
Approvals

Monitoring

Information

Cite policy requirement, or explain why item is on the Board agenda:

The Board of Trustees adopted a report of its Ad Hoc Committee on System and Institutional Assessment in November, 2007. The report included recommendations for refinements in the Board's Accountability Framework, including development and launch of an Accountability Dashboard. The dashboard was successfully launched in June, 2008.

Scheduled Presenter(s):

Linda L. Baer, Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs
Leslie Mercer, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research, Planning and Effectiveness
Craig Schoenecker, System Director for Research

Outline of Key Points/Policy Issues:

This item provides an update on the dashboard, the drill-down dashboards and proposed new measures.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

INFORMATION ITEM
Annual Update on Board Accountability Dashboard

BACKGROUND

The Board of Trustees adopted a report of its Ad Hoc Committee on System and Institutional Assessment in November, 2007. The report included recommendations for refinements in the Board’s Accountability Framework, including development and launch of an Accountability Dashboard. The dashboard was successfully launched in June, 2008.

The current Accountability Framework was proposed by the Ad Hoc Committee on System and Institutional Assessment and approved by the Board of Trustees in November 2007 (Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, 2007). Two of the key principles identified in the report that guided the work of the Ad Hoc Committee included:

- Align the measures with the strategic directions from the system’s strategic plan; and
- Limit the number of accountability measures to a “vital few.” The Board discussed establishing a maximum number of measures with the expectation that one would need to be dropped if a new one was added.

PROGRESS TO DATE

The Board approved framework includes ten measures. The accountability dashboard was launched in June 2008 with six of the measures reported. Work to complete the dashboard has included the following projects and activities:

Literature review, research and consultation have been undertaken to identify approaches for measuring partnerships, innovation and high quality learning and proposed revisions are described below.

The student engagement measure has been defined, data have been collected and the measure is now reported in the accountability dashboard.

Data and comments have being updated for the other measures in the dashboard.

A data mart has been designed and developed to serve as the repository for accountability, performance and planning data.

Drill-down dashboards have been developed and launched for five of the accountability measures.

CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

Two significant developments suggest that a review of the accountability framework measures is appropriate at this time.

The Board of Trustees is considering recommendations from its Ad Hoc Committee on System Planning for a revised strategic plan and will adopt a new plan later this spring. The proposed plan adds a fifth strategic direction, “Sustain financial viability during changing economic and market conditions.”

The second development is the Office of Legislative Auditor evaluation of the System that identified concerns regarding transfer of credits. The system’s response to the audit has led to a renewed focus on transfer.

NEW STRATEGIC DIRECTION

It is proposed that two measures be reported in accountability dashboard under the new fifth strategic direction. Both measures address draft goal 5.1 of the new strategic plan, “Make budget decisions that reflect priorities in the core mission and fiscal stewardship.”

Composite Financial Index – The composite financial index (CFI) would be added to the framework as one of two measures under the new strategic direction. The CFI is already being used by the system.

Facilities Condition Index – The facilities condition index (FCI) would be retained in the framework and shifted from the innovation strategic direction to the new fifth strategic direction.

REMAINING MEASURES

Innovation – A qualitative indicator of innovation would be developed and reported. The indicator would describe innovative services, programs and activities at the colleges, universities and the system and would report the basis for considering them to be innovative. Although innovation would be reported in the Accountability Dashboard, it would not be displayed as one of the ten core quantitative measures on the dials page. The dials page would include a link to a section of the dashboard which would report descriptive information about innovation.

This approach is consistent with the recommendations of a 2008 U.S. Department of Commerce advisory committee report on measuring innovation (Advisory Committee, 2008). The committee concluded that:

A standardized formula for measuring innovation will never exist.

Any approach that seeks to reduce innovation to a single measure...is unlikely to be realistic.

Qualitative and subjective measures of innovation are appropriate

Innovation measurement is an iterative process that should be treated like an ongoing dialogue rather than a project.

Partnerships: Transfer Credit Acceptance – The acceptance of credits in transfer would become the partnerships measure in the accountability framework. The addition of a transfer measure reflects the system’s renewed focus on transfer and the fact that transfer of credit also represents effective partnerships among institutions. The partnerships: transfer of credit measure would be reported as one of four measures under the access, opportunity and success strategic direction. The transfer measure is already being used by the system and directly addresses draft

goal 1.4 of the strategic plan, “Support students to reach their educational goals with a focus on graduation or transfer to complete postsecondary programs.”

High Quality Learning – A proposal for a high quality learning measure will be presented to the Board’s Academic and Student Affairs Committee in June.

Accountability Dashboard – The attached screen shot illustrates how the accountability dashboard dials page would look after implementing the proposed changes.

REFERENCES

Advisory Committee on Measuring Innovation in the 21st Century Economy (2008). *Innovation Measurement: Tracking the State of Innovation in the American Economy*. Washington, D.C.: U. S. Department of Commerce. Retrieved on April 8, 2010 from: http://www.highereducation.org/reports/mu_learning/index.shtml

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (2007), Report and Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on System and Institutional Assessment. St. Paul, MN: Author.

Proposed Revisions in Accountability Framework

The image shows a screenshot of a web-based dashboard for an accountability framework. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a home icon, a print icon, and links for 'Home | Print | Export | Help | Ask Us'. Below this are two dropdown menus: '-- Institution -- --Select All--' and '-- Reporting Period -- --Select All--'. The main content area is divided into several sections. On the left, there is a vertical menu with 'Accountability Dashboard' and 'Overview' highlighted. Below this menu, there are three main categories: 'Economic Competitiveness', 'High Quality Programs and Services', and 'Access, Opportunity and Success'. Each category has a corresponding data visualization area. The 'Economic Competitiveness' section includes 'Related Employment of Graduates' and 'Graduation Rates'. The 'High Quality Programs and Services' section includes 'Measures of Learning' and 'Student Satisfaction'. The 'Access, Opportunity and Success' section includes 'Percent Change in' and 'Measure Trend'. The dashboard also features various charts, including bar charts and line graphs, and a 'Definitions' section at the bottom.