NORTH DAKOTA LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT

Minutes of the

HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Monday, April 18, 2016
Alumni Conference Center, Thatcher Hall, Dakota College at Bottineau, Bottineau, North Dakota
Tuesday, April 19, 2016
Conference Center, Student Center, Minot State University, Minot, North Dakota

Representative Mark Sanford, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Members present: Representatives Mark Sanford, Thomas Beadle, Tracy Boe, Lois Delmore, Mark A. Dosch, Richard G. Holman, Dennis Johnson, Matthew M. Klein, Bob Martinson, Lisa Meier, David Monson, Kylie Oversen, Mike Schatz, Cynthia Schreiber Beck, Roscoe Streyle; Senators Tim Flakoll, Ray Holmberg, Karen K. Krebsbach, Carolyn C. Nelson, David O'Connell, Larry J. Robinson

Member absent: Representative Kathy Hawken

Others present: Dick Anderson, State Representative, Willow City
Andrew G. Maragos, State Representative, Minot
See Appendix A for additional persons present.

Chairman Sanford announced the next committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for June 7-8, 2016, in Valley City.

It was moved by Senator Flakoll, seconded by Senator Nelson, and carried on a voice vote that the minutes of the February 2-3, 2016, meeting be approved as distributed.

HIGHER EDUCATION STUDY

Information Technology Issues

Mr. Darin King, Deputy Chief Information Officer, and Mr. Brad Miller, Director of Information Security, Core Technology Services, North Dakota University System, presented information (Appendix B) regarding North Dakota University System information technology security policies and projects. Mr. King said the University System is in the process of reviewing the information technology security structure of the system. He said on average, there are approximately 30.7 million intrusion threats each month on University System information technology infrastructure. He said approximately 1 year ago the University System implemented an information technology intrusion protection and detection system.

Mr. Miller said the University System established an information technology security council to develop data classification standards to determine the level of protection needed for various types of data. He said the council is also developing security standards relating to networks, servers, and other information technology infrastructure.

In response to questions from Representative Streyle regarding the consistency of information technology security standards at institutions, Mr. Miller said there will be consistent high level security standards implemented at each institution. However, Mr. Miller said flexibility will be provided for institutions to adjust certain standards based on specific institution needs.

Mr. King presented information regarding information technology identity and access management, document imaging, and email consolidation efforts of the system. He said the identity and access management project is being implemented for security purposes to ensure that only authorized individuals have access to specific information technology resources at the appropriate time and for the appropriate reasons. He said the project is ahead of schedule and has an estimated completion date of November 2016.

Mr. King said the University System is transitioning all campuses to a single document imaging system. He said key applications of the system include scanning admissions, financial aid, accounting, and other documents. He said to date, six institutions have completed the transition to the systemwide document imaging system.

In response to a question from Chairman Sanford, Mr. King said the use of a systemwide document imaging system creates personnel efficiencies by eliminating the need for document imaging specialists at each institution.

Mr. King said the University System is in the process of consolidating institution email systems. He said in the past, each institution had its own email system for staff and students. He said the consolidation efforts will transition all institution email applications into one system.

In response to a question from Representative Delmore, Mr. King said there will not be significant cost savings as a result of the email consolidation project. Mr. King said the main benefit of the email consolidation project will be improved services to users.

Mr. King provided an update on the University System data center. He said the center is currently using 35 percent of the raised floor space and 50 percent of the electrical capacity of the center.

In response to a question from Representative Streyle, Mr. King said there is adequate physical space to expand the data center but additional technical architecture will eventually be needed. Mr. King said there may be opportunities for Core Technology Services to utilize servers at system institutions.

Dr. Lisa Feldner, Interim Chief of Staff, North Dakota University System, provided comments regarding University System data inconsistencies. She said a data inconsistency exists when information technology staff are unable to identify information for the same department or area at various institutions. She said 25 data inconsistency issues were identified for the University System and 6 of those inconsistencies have been addressed.

Representative Streyle said many of the University System data inconsistencies relate to campus budgeting and financial reporting.

Dr. Feldner said the budget and financial data inconsistencies are being remedied quickly. However, she said data inconsistencies relating to academic areas are more difficult to address.

In response to a question from Chairman Sanford, Dr. Feldner said the University System can provide information to the committee regarding the retention and completion success rates of students receiving a scholarship or grant through a state student financial assistance program.

In response to a question from Representative Delmore, Dr. Feldner said the University System is working with Job Service North Dakota and other entities to monitor the workforce success of University System graduates, including graduates working in neighboring states.

Update on Issues Affecting Dakota College at Bottineau

Dr. Jerry Migler, Dean, Dakota College at Bottineau, presented an update (Appendix C) on issues affecting the institution. He said key programs for the institution include nursing, photography, aquaponics, and agriculture. He said future opportunities for the institution include shorter term certificate programs, health care programs, expanding online courses, and collaborating with other institutions. He said challenges for the institution include revitalizing natural resources programs, upgrading nursing program facilities, improving campus marketing, improving residence halls, and addressing campus deferred maintenance.

In response to a question from Senator Robinson, Dr. Migler said campus residence halls were near capacity during the fall 2015 semester. Dr. Migler said occupancy rates dropped to approximately 75 percent during the spring 2016 semester.

The committee conducted a tour of selected campus facilities including the Nelson Science Center, the campus dining services area, and the Mead Residence Hall.

The committee recessed at 4:20 p.m. and reconvened at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, April 19, 2016, in the Student Center Conference Center, Minot State University, Minot.

Update on Issues Affecting Minot State University

Dr. Steven Shirley, President, Minot State University, Minot, provided an update (Appendix D) on issues affecting the institution. He said the institution recently recorded the highest student retention and completion rates in over 13 years. He said the institution has recently added programs in sign language, sports management, and entrepreneurship.

Dr. Shirley said the institution is in the process of developing a new strategic plan which will be completed in May 2016. He said the institution is also preparing for an accreditation visit from the Higher Learning Commission in 2017.

In response to a question from Senator Nelson regarding costs to expand the institution's nursing program, Dr. Shirley said the institution would need additional faculty, staff, and infrastructure to expand the program. Dr. Shirley said a major issue involving the expansion of the program would be having enough clinical education positions available for students.

Open Educational Resources

Dr. Tanya Spilovoy, Director of Distance Education and State Authorization, North Dakota University System, presented information (Appendix E) regarding the University System's open educational resources initiative. She said open educational resources are freely accessible learning materials that can be revised and redistributed for learning purposes. She said the goal of the University System open educational resources project is to reduce textbook costs and to increase access to information.

Dr. Spilovoy said a recent study found that University System faculty are more aware of open educational resources than their counterparts nationally. However, she said more than half of faculty members reported that they are not sufficiently aware of open educational resources to judge the quality of the resources. She said the 2015 Legislative Assembly appropriated $110,000 from the general fund to the University System for open educational resources training.

Dr. Julee Russell, Professor, Department of Language and Literature, Valley City State University, presented information (Appendix F) regarding the use of open educational resources at Valley City State University. She said open educational resources provide an opportunity to leverage the use of technology at the institution to better educate students. She said a recent student survey found most students are satisfied with the use of open educational resources for courses. She said during the spring 2016 semester, a total of $82,874 was saved by students at Valley City State University as a result of using open educational resources rather than traditional textbooks.

Dr. Spilovoy displayed videos regarding the use of open educational resources at Valley City State University and the University of North Dakota.

In response to a question from Senator Flakoll, Dr. Russell said many community colleges use open educational resources as part of student recruitment efforts. Dr. Russell said the institutions market the use of open educational resources as a cost savings tool for students.

Representative Boe suggested State Board of Higher Education policies be amended to encourage the use of open educational resources by faculty members.

Representative Beadle said North Dakota has been recognized as the first state to have all stakeholders, including the Legislative Assembly, State Board of Higher Education, and campuses, work together to implement open educational resources. He said a major benefit of using open educational resources is the amount of publications and materials that are available to students through partnerships with other entities such as the Minnesota Open Textbook Network.

In response to a question from Representative Holman, Dr. Spilovoy said the University System is using funding from multiple sources for the open educational resources initiative. Dr. Spilovoy said in addition to state appropriations, the system has also received grant funding for the initiative.

In response to a question from Representative Beadle, Dr. Spilovoy said University System institutions are in different stages in the process of training faculty on the use of open educational resources. Dr. Spilovoy said grants have been awarded to institutions to assist in training.

Use of Technology in the Classroom

Mr. Jerry Rostad, Assistant Chief Information Officer, North Dakota University System, displayed a video regarding the use of technology in various courses offered by University System institutions.

Education Pathways in Information Technology

Ms. Lisa A. Johnson, Systemwide Director of Student Entry, Transfer, and Retention, North Dakota University System, presented information (Appendix G) regarding information technology programs offered at University System institutions. She reviewed information technology related programs offered by University System institutions

including current enrollments and projected enrollment trends. She said many programs are designed for students to progress into a graduate-level program following the completion of a baccalaureate degree. She said many students also complete an internship as part of a program.

In response to a question from Representative Holman, Ms. Johnson said University System information technology programs are training students to both work with existing information technology systems and to design new systems.

In response to a question from Representative Schreiber Beck, Ms. Johnson said there is a national shortage of information technology personnel.

Predictive Analytics Reporting

Mr. David Konerza, Project Manager, Core Technology Services, North Dakota University System, and Mr. Russ Little, Chief Innovation Officer, Predictive Analytics Reporting Framework, presented information (Appendices H and I) regarding the implementation of predictive analytics reporting. Mr. Konerza said predictive analytics reporting is a data analysis system used to identify potential areas that may affect student success in college. He said the system can be used by institutional personnel as an intervention tool to assist students in overcoming obstacles that are affecting their education. He said the primary goal of the system is to improve student retention and graduation rates.

Mr. Little provided an overview of the system. He said the system assists institutions to:

1. Align student assistance resources to where they are needed most;
2. Manage interventions and monitor outcomes;
3. Identify actionable areas of risk at the student, course, and program levels; and
4. Drive action based on data and evidence.

In response to a question from Representative Delmore regarding the security of student data, Mr. Little said institutions assign a unique student identifier when submitting data to the predictive analytics reporting system. Mr. Little said after the data is analyzed, the institution uses the identifier to match the data results to the specific student.

In response to a question from Representative Monson, Mr. Konerza said a challenge of the system is to determine how the data can be processed and analyzed to achieve the goals of the institution.

In response to a question from Representative Holman, Mr. Little said institution leadership and staff can use the data to determine student success in various program areas. Mr. Little said individual program chairs and deans can use the data for purposes such as reaccreditation.

Senator Flakoll said institutions can compare data to peer institutions to determine performance levels. However, he said it is important for institutions to use appropriate peer groups for comparisons.

Mr. Konerza said institutions generally determine their peer groups. However, he said most institutions have been focusing on how to use the system instead of selecting peer groups and comparing data.

In response to a question from Representative Delmore, Mr. Little said there is an effort to ensure system data is used appropriately. Mr Little said it is important for institutions to provide consistent student support services regardless of student performance levels.

In response to a question from Senator Flakoll, Mr. Little said the system currently monitors student progress by reviewing the number of terms attended by a student and the number of credits taken per term. However, Mr. Little said the system may not recognize impacts from a student changing academic majors.

In response to a question from Representative Monson, Mr. Konerza said University System Core Technology Services staff members have been uploading data into the reporting system. Mr. Konerza said there has been some difficulties in uploading past data due to inconsistent reporting by institutions.

In response to a question from Representative Monson, Mr. Little said the purpose of the system is to develop better support systems for existing students. Mr. Little said the system is not being designed as a tool for determining admissions to an institution.

Representative Delmore said students are primarily responsible for their success. She said some legislators have questioned the need for intervention tools when students should be responsible for their own actions.

In response to a question from Senator Holmberg, Mr. Konerza said the reporting system does not have the ability to analyze student success at the course level.

NexusND Research Initiative

Mr. Rostad presented information (Appendix J) regarding the NexusND initiative. He said the initiative is integrating the emerging areas of unmanned aircraft systems, high performance computing, and cybersecurity. He said the initiative will leverage the resources of all 11 University System institutions to prepare the workforce of the future and create new economic growth sectors in the state.

In response to a question from Senator Holmberg, Mr. Rostad said the high performance computing center is being designed for future expansion to keep current with advances in technology.

Starfish Student Success System

Ms. Tammy Wolf, Student Advising and Retention Specialist, Minot State University, and Dr. Daniel Clayton, Assistant Professor, Minot State University, presented information (Appendix K) regarding the Starfish student success system. Ms. Wolf said the Starfish student success system is an early warning and student monitoring system that assists institution personnel to identify which students are at risk of failure in college. Once identified, she said resources can then be allocated to assist the students.

Dr. Clayton provided an overview of the Starfish student success system. He said the system notifies the appropriate individuals when a student has academic, attendance, or general concerns. He said the system can also be used to acknowledge student accomplishments.

In response to a question from Representative Holman regarding the privacy of student data, Ms. Wolf said institution faculty and staff must be properly certified in order to access any data in the system. Dr. Clayton said the system limits faculty access to only the data relating to the courses taught by the faculty member.

Potential Legislation to Be Considered by the Committee

Chairman Sanford said the committee has been assigned several studies and other related duties. He said as part of the studies and duties, the committee may recommend bill drafts to implement committee recommendations. He said the next committee meeting will include time to discuss potential bill drafts that may be recommended by the committee. He asked committee members to review the committee studies and duties and to be prepared to discuss potential legislation at the next meeting.

Chairman Sanford said information was received at the last committee meeting regarding campus police jurisdiction issues. He distributed a bill draft [17.0080.01000] that would authorize the State Board of Higher Education to enter agreements with political subdivisions for the joint exercise of law enforcement duties. He called for committee discussion on the bill draft.

Senator Robinson suggested the committee receive comments from the University System regarding the bill draft.

Representative Streyle said he does not support the bill draft. He said institutions are located within cities that already have police departments. He said it may be more appropriate for institutions to employ campus security officers to address most campus security issues and to have city police departments handle any criminal issues that occur on the campus.

Representative Schatz said he agrees with Representative Streyle's comments regarding the bill draft.

Senator Flakoll said he supports institutions having the authority to employ campus police officers. He said some campuses have more than 20,000 faculty, staff, and students. He said it is appropriate for an entity the size of a larger city to be allowed to have a police department.

Chairman Sanford said discussion on the bill draft will continue at the next committee meeting.

Higher Education Governance

Chairman Sanford distributed a document (Appendix L) detailing the committee findings relating to higher education governance. He said the State Board of Higher Education is also reviewing governance issues and suggested the committee findings be forwarded to the board for its consideration.

It was moved by Representative Streyle, seconded by Senator Holmberg, and carried on a roll call vote to include the committee findings, as contained in the document distributed, in the committee's final report and to request the Legislative Management Chairman forward the committee findings document to the State Board of Higher Education for consideration in the board's review of higher education governance issues. Representatives Sanford, Beadle, Delmore, Dosch, Holman, Johnson, Klein, Martinson, Meier, Monson, Schatz, Schreiber Beck, and Streyle and Senators Flakoll, Holmberg, Krebsbach, Nelson, O'Connell, and Robinson voted "aye." No negative votes were cast.

OTHER BUSINESS

Senator Flakoll acknowledged the retirement of Dr. Tom Seymour, Professor, College of Business, Minot State University. He said Dr. Seymour represented District 5 in the Senate during the 58th, 59th, 60th, and 61st Legislative Assemblies.

Senator O'Connell suggested the Legislative Council staff draft a resolution recognizing Dr. Seymour's contributions to Minot State University and the Legislative Assembly.

Chairman Sanford asked committee members to work with the Legislative Council staff to draft any bills or resolutions for committee consideration and to be prepared to present the drafts at the next committee meeting.

No further business appearing, Chairman Sanford adjourned the meeting at 2:00 p.m.

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Brady A. Larson
Assistant Legislative Budget Analyst and Auditor

ATTACH:12