

**VP FOR ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS**

Christina Brakken-Thal

**Sunday October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

Madame President and Esteemed Members of the Assembly,

The Board of Regents had a short meeting this month. I sat on the Educational Planning and Policy Committee. The committee heard a report on the strategic positioning for undergraduate students at the Duluth, Morris, Crookston, and Rochester campuses. While there are graduate students and the Duluth and Rochester campuses, they were not discussed since they felt they are dealt with by schools on the Twin Cities campus.

The Facilities Committee met this month. The Facilities committee approved the schematic plans and development of Phase 4 of the St. Paul campus chilled water facility (\$7.7 million, complete in Spring 2010) and the Wind Energy Conservation System Turbine Installation on the Morris Campus (\$7.4 million, complete in May 2010). Additional action was taken to approve a \$646,500 increase in the 2010 capital budget to include the Center for Magnetic Resonance Research (\$53,846,500, complete in Fall 2010). There was also a purchase approval for land in that area (22,000 square feet for \$506,000). An important presentation on the University Sustainability Goals and Outcomes was presented for each campus to inform the committee on goals to advance the sustainability efforts of the University. The committee also amended three leases with the University Gateway Corporation with respect to the sale of beer and wine outside McNamara Center on game days.

The Audit, Finance, and Faculty, Staff and Student Affairs did not meet this month.

The major meeting at the board of Regents was the work session where the *Report of the Financing the Future Task Force* was given. This task force was given the charge of discovering ways to finance the future of the University. For the first time in the history of the University, tuition dollars surpassed the amount of state support the U receives. This is a new paradigm that Administration does not believe will be reversed. The task force believes that tuition is the most stable revenue stream that the U has access to. They project that tuition will need to grow \$35-40 million annually to keep up with expenses. The task force also believes that the University will need to narrow its mission and have much more defined and concentrated goals. The Regents were very interested in this topic and eager to hear more defined ideas of how to accomplish these goals and objectives.

The Board had three major action items to vote on during this meeting. The first was the 2010 State Capital Request that Board unanimously approved. The request was \$2 million less than previously stated due to lower cost in the Folwell Hall renovation. The Capital Request included \$100 million for HEAPR, \$34.5 million for Folwell Hall Renovation, \$10 million for the American Indian Learning Research Center on the Duluth Campus, \$80 million for Physics and Nanotechnology, \$10 million for system wide laboratory renovation, and \$5.5 million for the Itasca Facilities improvements. The Regents stressed that the University will need to work very diligently with the Legislature considering their tendency to only grant us around half of our

HEAPR request. The Board also unanimously approved the *Creation and Organization of UMore Development LLC* and *Creation, Capitalization & Use of the UMore Park Legacy Fund*. The Regents expressed some concern with putting too much time and resources towards this project and requested to continue to have frequent updates with how the LLC is progressing. The last action item was in regards to the University Plan, Performance & Accountability Report and was also unanimously approved.

The student representatives had a private briefing on an update of the light rail project going through the U of MN. The University has sued the Metropolitan Council over issues of implementation and costs to the University. The U of MN is in intensive negotiations trying to avoid going to court over this project. The largest issues are protecting the research infrastructure along Washington Ave and noise mitigation during class hours. MSA is filing a friend of the court petition, and I will look into if GAPSAs should join MSA on this issue.

I finished serving of the Dean of the Graduate School Search Committee. The committee integrated information it heard from the private and public interviews with the three candidates and formed a list of strength and weaknesses for each candidate, which is presented orally to Provost Sullivan. We are expecting to hear by October 31<sup>st</sup> with an announcement on who Provost Sullivan selects as a candidate.

I am now serving on the Academic Issues Workgroup. The committee charge can be seen at <[http://www.academic.umn.edu/provost/graduate/documents/graduateschoolacademicissuesworkgroupcharge9-17-09\\_000.pdf](http://www.academic.umn.edu/provost/graduate/documents/graduateschoolacademicissuesworkgroupcharge9-17-09_000.pdf)>. I invite any students with questions about the committee to contact me. We have been charged to make initial recommendations on changes to 1) Advising Standards/Training Programs for University Faculty, 2) Fellowship, Block Grants and Other Student Financial Support, 3) Program Reviews, 4) Program Approvals, 5) Governance Structure, and 6) Metrics and Measurements. The committee is going to break these down into 3 workgroups. I am currently working with COGS to get more graduate student involvement in this committee.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The next Board of Regents meeting is November 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. All students are welcome to attend or watch live. Information of the upcoming agenda will be posted at <<http://www1.umn.edu/regents/meetings.html>> approximately 1 week before the meeting.

Thank You,

Christina Brakken-Thal  
612-599-8163  
[brakken-thal@cems.umn.edu](mailto:brakken-thal@cems.umn.edu)